BCM

A Belgian J-Culture Magazine

Nr 16: January - February 2014

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bloodthirsty butchers

Synk;yet

BLUE CLOUD

LOKA

Ryo Fujimura

City Hall

Ergi

Fashion & features

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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed by people interviewed are their own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the BCM staff. Thus we cannot and will not be held responsible for them.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our 16th edition! Which is simultaneously the last of 2013 and the first of 2014! A very Happy New Year to all our readers and crew, whom I cannot thank enough for all their help and support, BCM wouldn't be here without you so thank you for being awesome!
As always we bring you event reports, fashion, music and more!

Fashion wise we have an article and feature about twinning and to start the year on a positive note our second feature is all about love: the love we have for our particular styles or aspects of the Japanese fashion styles we choose to wear. And to top it off: an interview with Swedish indi designer and brand distributor Eva of Ergi.

The music fans can rest assured, we have concert reports, reviews and interviews ranging from types of rock, to various styles of punk and visual kei to shoegazing. We were lucky enough to catch all these talented artists either face to face or via email for your reading pleasure!

And to prove that great manga don't necessarily have to come from Japan we spoke to the creators of the excellent French manga series City Hall.

Happy reading, I hope you will all enjoy this edition!

Hilde Heyvaert
Chief editor

TWINNING IS A HIP, FUN AND POPULAR PAST-TIME AMONGST J-FASHIONISTAS.
AND WHILST IT LOOKS DECEPTIVELY EASY,
THERE'S A LOT MORE TO IT THAN MEETS THE EYE.

First of all, let us begin by saying that twinning isn't just reserved for the Lolita division of Japanese fashion. Whilst it is a fact that it is most common amongst that fashion style, you can do it with literally any fashion style in existence. So please don't be discouraged from doing it in other style just because we only have Lolita examples. The fact just is that due to its popularity in Lolita fashion, mostly people from that scene that answered to the call for photo submissions.
Another misconception that should be rectified is that, yes most twinning seems to happen with brand, but under no circumstance is brand manda-tory when wanting to twin. In our twinning feature we have a stunning example of two friends twinning with handmade, customised and offbrand bought items. If that isn't proof that you don't need brand to twin I don't know what is.
And of course, you can be with more than two as well, apply the appropriate term of multiplicity in that case. The same rules apply though, no matter how many more people you add to the wardrobe coordination good times.
Many different types of twinning exist, so in this article we will try to shed light on the most common and popular ones.

Identical twinning

As the name suggests: this is the kind of twinning where literally the entire outfit is identical, with possible exception from hair of course as not everyone has the same hair colour and cut when natural hair is used. Which is why you often see people wearing identical wigs with this type of twinning as well. And obviously glasses, as one does like to be able to see when getting around.
It is the most extensive form of twinning, as literally every detail needs to match. Allowances are made on print colour, as you often see people will identical outfits but each wearing their main piece, such as the JSK, in a different colourway. Whilst that is slightly divergent of identical twinning, it still counts considering the rest of the outfits and accessories are otherwise identical.

Print twinning

When two people compose outfits and both wear the same print. The outfits need not be identical otherwise, and whilst they may look very matching, the theming and overall look of both may be radically different. Whilst in most cases both coords will still match very well, in the more extreme cases you may get two completely different substyles of the same fashion style. This is probably the most common form of twinning.

Main piece twinning

The same rules as print twinning apply, but this is for outfits based around a main piece that is plain.

And of course, as is the case with many things, there are forms of twinning that are considered the odd one out. In fact, there is quite a bit of debate about whether this should be considered twinning at all, and isn't just a case of themed outfits rather than anything else.
We're not going to tell you how to label this sort of thing, as that is not the point nor the aim of this article, however, as there are quite a few people that do consider these forms of twinning, we have decided to include them for completeness sake.
If in your honest opinion this is twinning, by all means call it that. If you don't see it as such, agree to disagree with those that do and call it what you feel it should be called instead.
In any case, these are still things that are great fun to do, and are may pose a good sollution when none of the real forms of twinning are an available option at the time.

Colour twinning

One of the rarer forms of twinning, and one that may not seem like twinning at first sight because you may get two (or more) people wearing outfits that have nothing in common bar the colours used in the outfit. As the colours are literally the only thing that needs to match for this, it's a good solution when people want to twin, but otherwise have nothing else in common in their wardrobe than coloration. It's also a great way to include guys, who are generally far more limited if they don't wear Brolita in the coordinated group. Of course, you may have to explain that you're colour twinning to people if you wear different outfits in the same colourways because otherwise it may be hard to tell. That doesn't make doing it less fun though!

Concept twinning

When the print and colours become secondary and the theme becomes primary concern we talk about concept twinning. This is of course a very broad concept in itself and once again you can get people together who are clearly twinning outfits that are clearly matching. Examples would be two people wearing an outfit with the same fandom theme, two people wearing book print based outfits but both with main pieces from different brands, or two people wearing an outfit in an obviously matching theme. Just like colour twinning this is an excellent way for people that don't own the same print, or wear the same style to "twin" an outfit anyway.
Obviously when there is a general theme to say, a meet, you can't speak of concept twinning, but if a group of friends to go with a theme together for whatever reason, the term might apply, depening on whether you wish to call it twinning or theming of course.

TWINNING: at least twice the fun!

Twinning Angelic Pretty's Day Dream Carnival.

Hair accessories, offbrand. **Carousel headpiece**, handmade by Lunie and Dody. **Blouse**, Angelic Pretty. **JSK**, Angelic Pretty. **Star bag**, Angelic Pretty. **Socks**, Alice and the Pirates. **Shoes**, Angelic Pretty.

Twinning Angelic Pretty's Milky Planet.

Headbow, Angelic Pretty. **Hair accessories**, Angelic Pretty, handmade, offbrand. **Vief's onepiece dress**, Angelic Pretty . **Annso's jumperskirt dress**, Angelic Pretty. **Annso's blouse**, Angelic Pretty. **Star bag**, Angelic Pretty. **Shooting star bag**, Angelic Pretty. **Socks**, Angelic Pretty. **Shoes**, Secret Shop. **Other accessories**, Angelic Pretty, offbrand, handmade.

Floral antler crown, handmade by Joke and Saltje. **Wigs,** Lockshop Wigs. **Bambi top:** Primark. **Cardigan:** customised offbrand.
Deer print skirt: handmade by Joke and Saltje. **Socks:** Saturday market. **Sneakers:** customised Primark.

Mask, taobao. **Hair flowers**, Claire's and H&M. **Faux fur fox stoles**, taobao. **Burgundy blouse**, taobao. **Purple blouse**, Dolly + Delly. **Toy pistol props**, Spy Museum Oberhausen. **Corset**, Draculaclothing. **Belt**, vintage. **Bag**, vintage. **Bloomers**, AyraLeona. **Garters**, AyraLeona. **Burgundy socks**, Primark. **Purple socks**, ebay. **Shoes**, an*tai*na.

Twinning with Lady Sloth's Magical Landscape skirt.

Wig, Lockshop. **Cardigan**, Primark. **Skirt**, Lady Sloth. **OTK socks**, Primark. **Saltje's engeneer boots**, Qutieland. **Valerie's boots**, offbrand.

Twinning Angelic Pretty’s Star Night Theatre.

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check it !

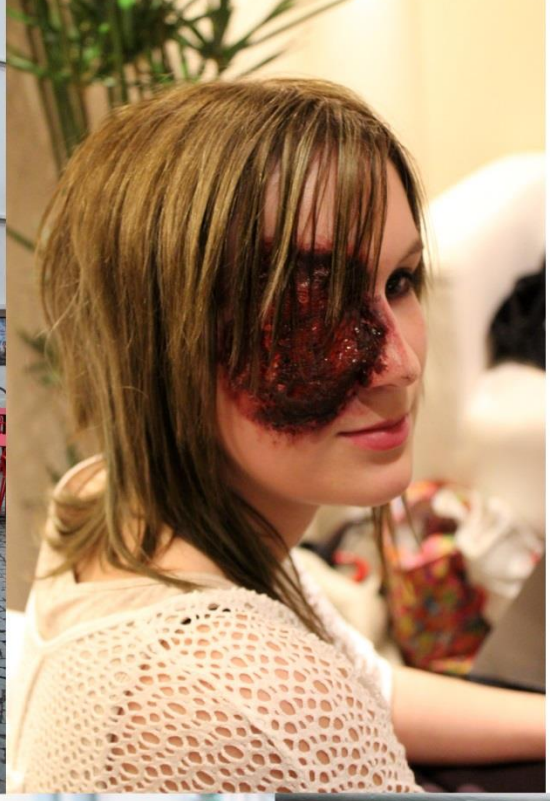
LUNIE SHOP.com

Japanese fashion
Clothes ★ Accessories
Shoes ★ Wigs ★ and more !

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS OF THE ANTWERP ZOMBIE WALK

Saturday, October 26; Kammenstraat, Antwerp, Belgium

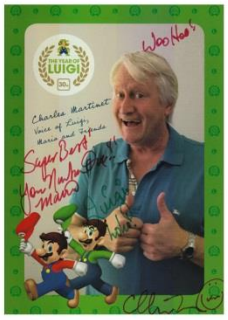
Photography by Laura Sheridan (facebook.com/BLaura.Photography)



Halloween J-FASHION WALK

Sunday, October 27
Antwerp - Belgium

Photography by
Fanny, Hilde Heyvaert and Valerie Vliegen.



Event: Japan Expo Belgium, tome 3
When: November 1 - 3
What: J-culture convention
Where: Tour & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium
Ticket price: varied, depending on the formula
Website: www.japan-expo.be

Japan Expo Belgium, the Belgian subsidiary convention of the near legendary *Japan Expo* that is held yearly at the *Expo Paris-Nord-Villepinte* in July, has already gotten to its third year, and is, we are happy to note, not breaking it's streak of improving every single year, growing into a bigger and better version of what it was the year before.

Even though this is indeed one of Belgium's two true J-culture conventions (the other being *Made in Asia* in March), this is the one that focusses on not only catering to the J-culture fans, but also on making sure that other visitors find something to entertain and amuse themselves with.

Organisation wise towards visitors Japan Expo is a dream. It's very clear where you have to enter with what kind of ticket, they have special standees all over the place with maps so people can easily locate where they are, where they want to be and where to find a particular stand or event. If you for some reason didn't get your hands on an event map, this helps you get by nonetheless. They also have a large info stand and make sure to have staff on hand that speaks English, French or Dutch, so you should be able to find someone to ask questions in a language you understand.

They had split up the event in three main halls, with several side rooms added.
The first and second ones homed stores and food stands, and we were pleased to notice that whilst food was of course still on the more expensive side, it was at least economically priced and there was a good variety ranging from crépes to Japanese food to hotdogs, sandwiches and a fries shop. If you hadn't brought your own food and drink, you could at least get a meal, drinks included, for under € 10 - € 15 depending on what you got, often with some change to spare. Still not cheap, but considering what the food prices were last year and at other conventions we visited, this is a definite improvement.

The third room was reserved for another food stand and the stands of various gaming companies such as Sony with their Playstations, Microsoft with the X-box and of course Nintendo, who had brought along the Wii-U, 3DS and 2DS for testing and entertainment. As well as the goodies stand where at set times various things where thrown into a very loud crowd that gathered, happy to receive some free swag.

Of course, a convention isn't a convention without the typical things: cosplay and cosplay competition, shopping, martial arts demos, various workshops and gaming, this much is of course true, but the cool thing about Japan Expo Belgium is that they try to either make their stands bigger (Nintendo for instance had the biggest Belgian section I've seen to date at a Belgian con, with their own special events for the Year of Luigi) and their events slightly different to those others provide.
There were lectures, panels and tons of competitions as well, which is something that isn't that common for Belgian conventions, and let's face it, where else did you get the opportunity to ask *Yasuhiro Irie*, the creator of *Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood* (amongst other things) some questions? Aside from all of that, there were of course the bands performing on the main stage: *Neko Light Orchestra*, *BLUE CLOUD* and *LOKA*, introducing (new) artists to the Belgian audiences with excellent music.

To avoid the actual J-culture area getting horribly clogged up, they had moved it to the basement section, along with the signing rooms. Where this may seem a bit strange, it did mean that only the people that were genuinely interested in the Japanese displays and workshops, ranging from *ikebana* to calligraphy were downstairs, and the area offered a bit of an oasis of peace. My sole regret for it is the horrible overly yellow light in the area.

Even though there were a lot of people on the Saturday, which is the busiest of the three days, it never felt overly crowded. It does get quite hot inside that day so it's advisable to dress with that in mind.

Japan Expo Belgium once again had a bit of everything, catering to a very wide variety of interests of the public that visited the convention. As well as a great and friendly atmosphere. Of course it can't be compared to the main Japan Expo, but it definitely offers a fabulous alternative to those unable to visit that one. Plus it's the kind of con where even people with only limited interest in Japanese culture will still be able to have an excellent time. In short: the third edition was a fabulous one, and we look forward to seeing what new and improved things they'll have to offer to us next year.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS OF JAPAN EXPO BELGIUM, TOME 3

November 1 - 3, Tour & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

CELEBRATING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY OF NIPPON ZASSHI

Saturday, November 16; CC Rix, Deurne, Belgium

Photography by Michael Crols and Rutger Gaumann.

Event: Emporium Vernesque
When: Saturday, November 16
What: steampunk convention
Where: Willemeen and LUXOR Live, Arnhem, The Netherlands
Ticket price: € 10 in presale and € 12,50 at the door
Website: www.emporiumvernesque.com

Whilst it is true that Emporium Vernesque is a bonafide steampunk convention, one of the two held annually in The Netherlands (the other being D.E.S.C. end of July in Meppel), this convention is very welcoming to everyone interested in steampunk, whichever interest (literary, fashion, cinematographic, you name it) that may be. It comes as no surprise that you see all manner of steampunks together with people in normal clothing or outfits belonging to other subcultures gathering together at the Willemeen venue whenever the event is happening.

Once again the organisation managed to put up a well varied and very welcoming event, with a program that was bound to contain something for everyone.

Taking into account the spacing issue from the first edition last year, they had moved several parts of the program to the *LUXOR Live* venue, literally around the corner from the main part of the event: the Willemeen. They had put up a handy program sign near the cloack room, giving people ample opportunity to figure out what was happening where.

Even though the convention, despite of being spread over two locations, is still small scale, it makes up for that by using every possible inch of available surface to do something. Ranging from shops, a photo opportunity set up, lectures, workshops, bands, board game and crafting tables, space to sit and two bars. An upstairs one for drinks and a downstairs one for drinks and affordable food. And if none of the food is to your liking, simply cross the street or turn the corner to be within walking distance of the Arnhem city centre where you are bound to find something edible that does strike your fancy.

In that way, Willemeen and LUXOR Live are top locations, right around the corner from the main bus stop, the central train station and the heart of the city itself, with parking nearly available (mostly not free but hey, you can't have everything!).

And size aside, they are very cosy. I personally did feel like adding the second venue to the program did help to alleviate some of the crowdedness from last year, but it was still not that easy to move about most of the time. But you know, the sheer fun and fabulous atmosphere of the convention made up for that.
Eventually the Willemeen will sadly prove too small for this convention, which will no doubt be growing per annum, but for now, it does work.

Shopping wise it was a veritable dream for finding bits and pieces to make and upgrade costumes with.
Socialising wise it was absolutely fantastic. It was nice to see so many different styles of steampunk together, and especially great that people were so open minded towards other styles of the movement, even fringe styles. I personally feel that this warm and welcoming feel is something typical to this event, and that alone is a good reason to visit Emporium Vernesque. Everything else just adds to the awesomeness of this event. Fashion wise I saw everything from Victorian horror, what we would see as "classic" steampunk, steampunk lolita neo-Victoriana, SteamGoth, ethnic steam, casual steampunk to Nerfpunk and a few Dieselpunks.

My only regret was the costume/outfit competition. Instead of letting everyone entering that wanted to they had an impartial person pick out his personal six favourites, who were then judged by an applause meter by the gathered crowd. It's just a bit of a pity it went this way, because there were so many people there with awesome outfits and I feel that all of them that had wished to participate should have been given the opportunity. Also applause meters are never impartial but a matter of "who has the most friends" (it is how it is), so maybe next year they can get a jury together of the steampunk fashion writers, there's always at least two present after all, and surely one can trust in a jury of peers so to speak. So hopefully next year, everyone will be able to enter that wishes to do so and judging really will be impartial.

It does need saying that it was great to see that there were several styles represented from the "classic" steampunk fashions to SteamGoth. So it was good to see diversity represented on stage.

That one competition aside, this edition was even better than the last one, and if they keep on going on the track they are now, I have no doubt that this could become the prime steampunk convention of Europe. I'm curious to see what they'll do next year!

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

FLY AWAY FASHION WINTER 2013 TEA PARTY

The Mad Carnival

Sunday, November 24; Houten, The Netherlands

Photography by Saltje Khenfi, Annso Vermeylen and Jeroen Willems.

THE 6TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF RÂMEN EVENTS!

All kinds of awesome and concerts by Ryo Fujimura and HITT!

Saturday, November 30; Bar Live 301, Roubaix, France.

Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert. Flyer from the Râmen Events website.

ANNUAL BELGIAN CUPCAKES J-FASHION MEET IN BRUSSELS

to celebrate the group's anniversary at the Christmas market

Sunday, December 1st; Brussels, Belgium

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert, Matthew Sweeck and a kind passer-by.

LOLITA FASHION MEET

Sunday, December 1st; Eindhoven, The Netherlands

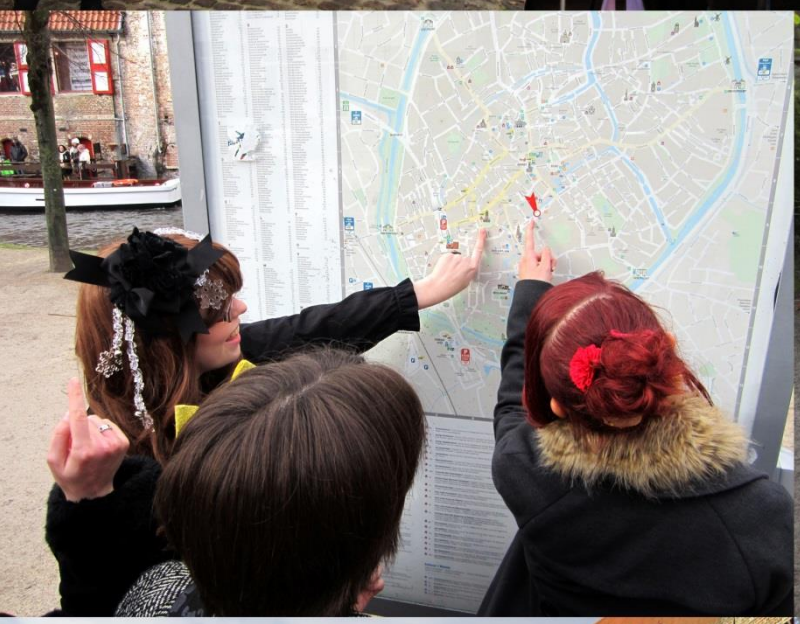
Photography by and provided by Saltje Khenfi.

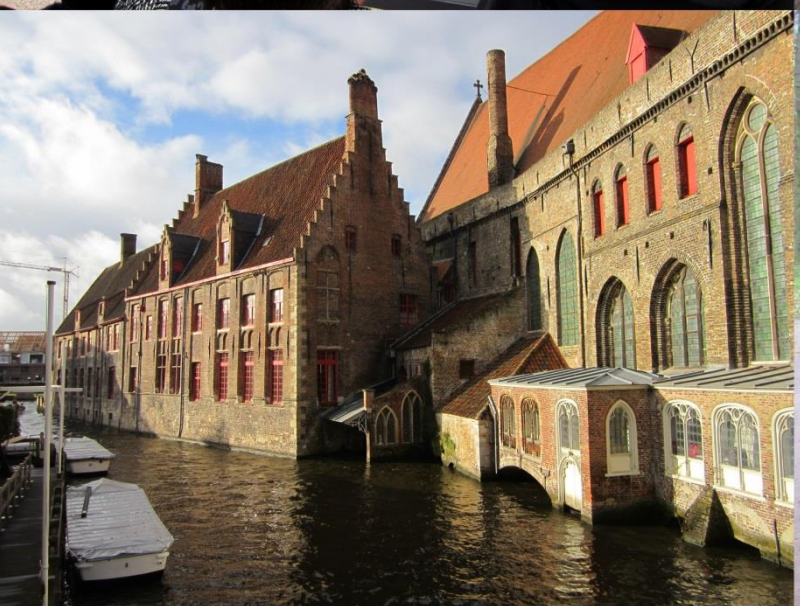
INTERNATIONAL WINTER LOLITA DAY MEET UP IN BRUGES

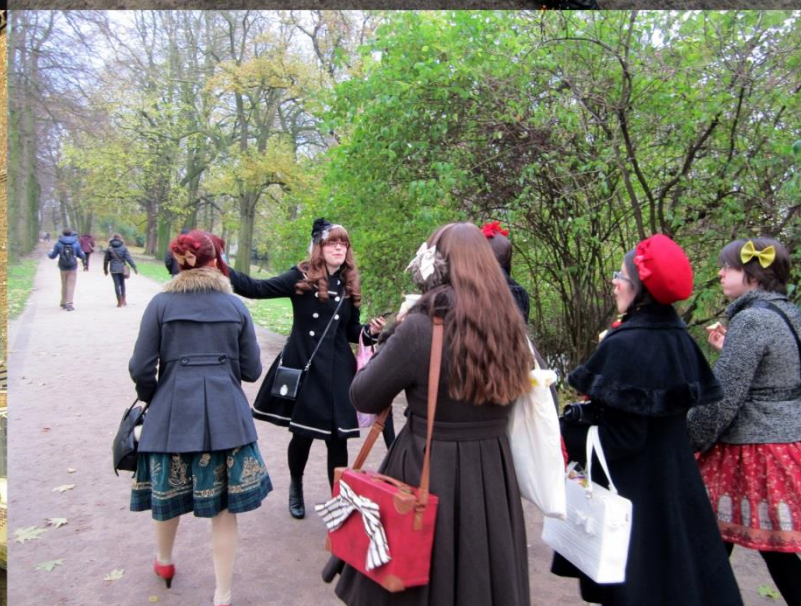
Visting the Christmas market, exploring the beautiful city and attending a harp concert.

Saturday, December 7th, Bruges, Belgium.

Photos by Joke Schalley.







Event: Midwinter Fair
When: Saturday, December 7 & Sunday December 8
What: fantasy event
Where: Archeon, Aphen aan den Rijn, The Netherlands
Ticket price: € 11
Website: www.archeon.nl

For the 11th time already, *Midwinter Fair* took place at the archeological park of *Archeon* on a cold December weekend. This year we were in better luck than the last, as there was no snow and persistent rain. Other than some drizzle on occasion, the weather stayed bright and lovely, which was a distinctive bonus when it came to exploring the domain, which really is awesome and very suited to events like these.

Contrary to other fantasy fairs, Midwinter Fair offers more historically inspired entertainment throughout ranging from story tellers, puppeteers, various roaming musicians in medieval and fantasy garb to herbologists and pagan weddings. But aside from the historical character that distinguishes this fair from others, they also add contemporary elements such as martial arts displays, horseback (on a unicorn even) acrobatics and a steampunk camp, set up by *The Steampunk Objective*.

Aside from all of this they set up a variety of shows (which may or may not start on time) and they do their best to really go with their theme.
This year they tied in with the *Game of Thrones* hype and went for "*Winter is Coming*", choosing the side of *House Stark*.
You could find A4sized notice posters asking for Stark recruits, the capture of members of *House Lannister*, etc.
They also had a Game of Thrones themed show and House Stark encampment where people could participate in a sword fighting demo.
And to top it off, they had a *HBO iron throne* set up like you see at many other conventions. But with less of a crazy queue for it.
Of all the themed events I've been to, this one was definitely the one that made most out of the theme, and without becoming overbearing too. They had a really good balance of going with it so everyone that wanted to participate in it, and those that didn't want to could ignore it.

Food isn't cheap, but it's not extortionately priced either. You can get it throughout most of the event, from stands both outside and inside. The options are rather limited though, so if you're a picky eater or simply don't want to eat soup, fries, tiny pancakes, apple pie, sausage buns or sandwiches with veg, cheese or ham, you may want to consider bringing your own. Which is allowed, so starving can be avoided. And for the fast food fans, there's a *McDonalds* across the street from Archeon as well.

And whilst we're on the subject of spending money: shopping wise this fair is a dream, they put most of their stores in large tent like complexes set up for the occasion, and to add extra buildings to the already existing ones, which is great in case the weather doesn't cooperate. They also have stages in them where bands perform or workshops on things like the basics of historical dance, which are always popular. But the fact that they are safe from the weather if it acts up isn't what makes it awesome, it is the diversity that does. You see quite a few stores you don't see at other events, creating the opportunity to shop for things you would otherwise have to do quite a bit of searching for online, or pay hefty shipping fees. And this generally for very reasonable prices. There's even quite a bit on offer for J-culture and J-fashion enthusiasts and I saw several people wearing Japanese fashion styles. It may not be a J-culture event, but it definitely is one of those things you can attend to in J-fashion as it is open to Japanese influenced things just as well.

All of this combined, together with the overall atmosphere and unique domain of Archeon, makes that Midwinter Fair is an altogether different type of event, definitely worth to brave the winter for.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Marijke Van Hauwaert.

MIMIGERNAFORD LOLITA WINTER MEET UP

Sunday, December 15;
Munster, Germany

Photography by and provided by Clara Lina Wirz

LOLITA FASHION MEET FOR KYLA! WHO IS VISITING FROM THE US :)

Photo fun, Christmas shopping, Christmas market, bubble tea at 8tea5 and dinner at Wagamama!

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and a kind passer-by.

J-MUSIC CORNER

Japanese music reviews and interviews

Reviews by Hilde Heyvaert, Bert Van den Wyngaert & Mdina Van der Linden.

ADAMS
"Seseragi"
Single

Whilst *ADAMS* is generally known for their electro rock, they are mixing in other genres on their latest three song release. Very successfully too I must say. Whist their previous single, *Bitter-sweet*, was more aggressive and on the heavier electro rock side, *Seseragi* has a lot more feeling with softer beats. They still use rock guitars of course, but the overall feel of this single is different, slightly more poppy and club style music, showing the versatility of ADAMS without breaking down their electro roots.
For the fans: ADAMS will tour Europe in March, the dates that are available so far can be found in our calendar.

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bloodthirsty butchers
"youth"
Album

Imagine my surprise that when first putting on *bloodthirsty butchers*' new album (their 9th so far, but admittedly the first by them I have heard), and being greeted not by the hard hitting sounds I imagined, but by introvert and almost shy guitar riffs and matching vocals. Yes you guessed it right, bloodthirsty butchers is a shoegazing band. And a very good one at that. There's none of the pretence and hipster feel you generally get from bands in this genre, instead they play their own brand of an almost melancholy rock full of integrity, spiced up with old school guitar effects and just a tiny bit of electronics where needed. It sounds like the best of the nineties noise rock but now matured and toned down. If you're into more serene and calm types of solid rock music, I would definitely recommend this album because it's well worth listening to, and without a shadow of a doubt one of the best things ever released within this genre.

HITT
"No Singing, No Life"
EP

HITT is back with a new mini-album. Where fans may come to expect his general piano filled, jazzy, brand of J-rock, they may be surprised by No Singing, No Life. He's reworked several of his older songs, but in a more mature and acoustic way, playing around with Jazz and Bosa Nova as well as quieter and more intimate versions of his own particular style. It's different of of course, but it just shows that HITT can do more than what he's known for and isn't afraid to experiment and show different sides of himself.

I-ai
"Crystallize"
Album

I-ai has released a rather diverse 11 song album in *Crystallize*, combining several influences and genres to keep things varied. They're one of those bands that has a traditional J-rock mixed with electronics type of sound. Songs range from more ballad types, sometimes melancholy and sometimes soft to a kind of electronic, almost metal, and those in between. It's definitely a mix and match of all kinds of things, which is always a bit of a gamble so kudos to them for going with it.
For the fans: I-ai will tour Europe in January, the dates that are available so far can be found in our calendar.

J
"Freedom No. 9"
Album

J (also known as the bassist of LUNA SEA), is back and how. Where he experimented with a more mellow musical style on his previous album, *On Fire*, he returns to the kind of post-punk and hard hitting J-rock he is best known for, delivering instant classics such as *Maria* and *Never End* (to name but two), that can easily compete with the songs he's best known for such as *Feel Your Blaze* and *Pyromania*. It's one of his strongest albums, if not the strongest, and shows his growth as both a musician, lyricist, composer and singer. Whilst it may sound as more of the same by J from reading this review, it's still very diverse and contains literally nothing but good songs ranging from ballad to hard & heavy and even jazzy. A definite recommendation to everyone who loves post-punk and J-rock.
The one and only downside is the "documentary" that comes with the limited edition (red cover instead of green) version of the album. It's not a documentary at all, but rather a trailer for the next *Crazy, Crazy* DVD with a fragment of Maria playing in the background. So unless you really want that, don't bother shelling out more for the limited edition and just watch his documentary footage he put up on Youtube instead.
Frankly in my opinion it's all fun to watch but not really worth the extra money you pay for the limited edition, the music is awesome enough by itself to stick to the regular version.

LUNA SEA
"A Will"
Album

After keeping the fans waiting for a whopping thirteen years, *LUNA SEA* returns with a full album in the year of the 25th anniversary. About half of the eleven tracks are original material, the others are songs previously released on single. Frankly I would have preferred that they released a single compilation album and did a new full CD that only contains new material, but it is what it is. *A Will* is a varied, good, decent and accomplished album, and it does contain some very strong songs. The influence of each member of LUNA SEA is clear in how the songs are composed and performed and the band sound remains intact even after all those years.

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my way my love
"Angel - demo"
single

This limited edition EP of my way my love should get it's public release. Only sold during the band's *The Fact Is …Angel* 2013 tour, it's a right shame it's not readily available like their album *The Fact Is*, because this is awesome. It's very cool to hear the demo tracks from songs from The Fact Is of course, but the new songs are simply so fantastic they deserve to be heard by all fans of the band and this genre of electronic/noise rock. The band continues on the same style as they did on their last album, but further explores it, and mixes more of their old sound from before as well, which leads to an even better mix of guitar rock with electronics and noise. This is noise rock at it's very best, enough of the electronic sound effects to keep it fresh and original as well as rock so solid that it easily puts *my way my love* at the very top of their particular genre. I've said it before, and I'll say it again, but the best and most refreshing Japanese music released in 2013 is from the hand of *Yukio Murata*, this single just proves it yet again.

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the GazettE
"Beautiful Deformity"
Album

This album is really a release worthy of *the GazettE*, and quintessentially them. It contains both heavier and softer songs, and this time every band member has contributed at least one song to the album. Where *Division* was more experimental, *Beautiful Deformity* returns to the original GazettE sound, back to the roots as it were. The band themselves also explain it like this, and I do agree with the statement. Either you like it right away, or you'll have to listen to it a few times before you reach that point, but it's an album that's definitely well worth it. Especially if you like the classic band sound. Added to the music, a lot of work has also put into the concept of the album cover, for which every member chose an animal that was then made into a sculpture. So this is really a case of the band working as one, both on the record and on the packaging.

Yoshiki
"Yoshiki Classical"
Album

Yoshiki is of course best known for his work with *X Japan*, but on this album he once again proves he can do more than play that particular kind of J-rock as he composes beautiful and epic style classical songs. Style wise think the majestic classical music you often hear on movie soundtracks, and you know what kind of tracks he's composed for this particular album, and if that's something you like, I can really not recommend this enough. Some of these 11 recordings are re-releases, of often quite hard to get songs so that offers a nice opportunity for fans to get their hands on them now, or reworked, classical, versions of existing songs from one of Yoshiki's projects, but it doesn't diminish the total coherence of the album at all.

BLUE CLOUD

Japan Expo Belgium, tome 3
Tour & Taxis - Brussels - Belgium
Saturday, November 2 2013

Japanese emo punk band *BLUE CLOUD* had won a kind of "*Battle of the Bands*" type of contest in Japan, earning them a spot on the main stage of Japan Expo Belgium, tome 3. And from the first note on it was really rather clear why they were the winners of this competition as they rocked the stage.

Singer *KYO'N*'s female vocals worked perfectly with the original style of punk the band was bringing. Sadly the volume of the vocals was often too low compared to that of the instruments, which made it a little hard to hear what she was singing, or to hear her singing full stop, even in the front row, which was a pity.
Of course this is nothing the band can do anything about, and the sound guy of the event really could have done a better job there, but sadly it was how it was.

That issue aside, BLUE CLOUD's 45 minute showcase performance, even at the end of the second day near closing time, had drawn a fair amount of fans of (Japanese) punk music, that were all happily getting into the music and the band had thus no issue what so ever to get the crowd on their side.
Every song was welcomed with as much enthusiasm as the last one, and I'm pretty sure BLUE CLOUD easily managed to gain some new fans and followers in Belgium thanks to their fantastic and energetic live.
They were fully accepted by the Belgian audience, and rightfully so considering their awesome performance, with a lot of warmth and love, and it was more than clear that the band loved being there and interacting with the audience.

They may not have been able to speak the language, but they tried really hard to speak some French nonetheless and even though it didn't quite work out, no one held that against them and simply was happy that the band put in the effort of trying to communicate.
After the concert several fans snuck into the safety zone to ask for autographs and photos with the band, which they were happy to provide, clearly beaming that people were so receptive of their music and loving their concert that much.

Hopefully BLUE CLOUD will be able to return to Belgium and the rest of Europe for a proper tour, because it would be great to see them in clubs playing a full gig rather than a showcase. I'm sure that would be even better than this one, and it was pretty epic already.

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

LOKA

Japan Expo Belgium, tome 3
Tour & Taxis - Brussels - Belgium
Sunday, November 3 2013

It was the first Belgian date of *LOKA*'s European leg of their *DEVA's* tour and the day after they had performed in Cologne, Germany. The previous late night and travelling hadn't tempered their energy to perform, however, and they gave it the best they could on the Japan Expo Belgium, main stage on Sunday a little after noon for a 45 minute showcase.

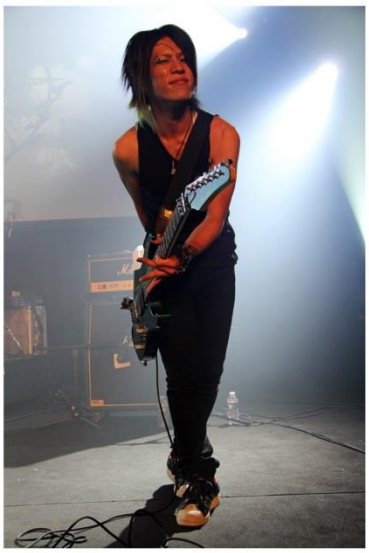
Even though there was a fair distance between the band and the audience, they managed to cover that easily and singer *Kihiro* took the time to address the audience and, just like his band members *Sin* (guitar) and *Katsumi* (bass) made use of the stage so that everyone got a chance to see them properly regardless of where they were in the crowd.

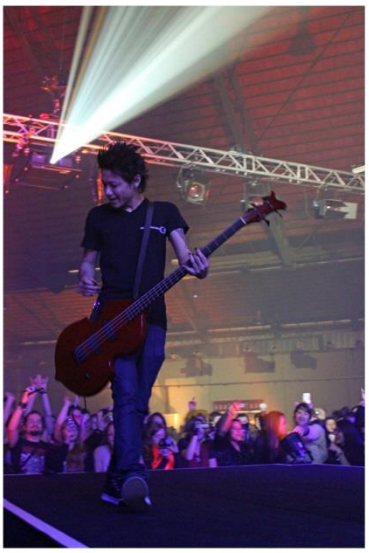
For those that don't know LOKA, their particular brand of post-punk can best be described as a mix between *NOFX* and *Pennywise* and a little *Linkin Park* mixed in for good measure. It may sound strange but it really works, and despite of the three significant names just mentioned, they are definitely very much their own band. And they really rock an audience, even people that only knew them from the promotion that *Râmen Events* did online before the tour, or just showed up out of curiosity easily went up in the music and found themselves enjoying the concert to the fullest. No doubt many a member of the audience wished it lasted longer than just 3 quarters of an hour because of the high energy of the performance of the band and strong sound.

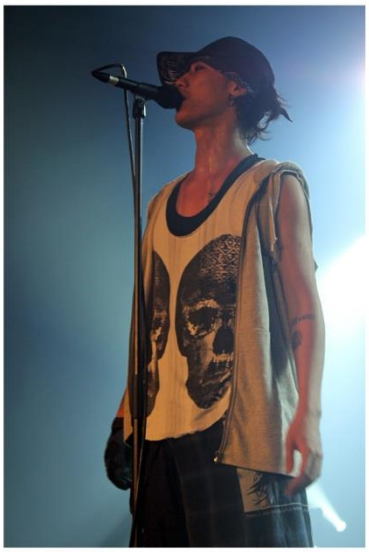
It needs to be said that they sounded great, regardless of the pace and style of the song they were playing, and overall it was a gig that sadly was over far too soon after it got started.

Setlist
1.SLICK
2. FROM YESTERDAY
3. 11th HOUR
4. MAKE IT THROUGH
5. DON'T EVER LEAVE ME OUT
6. LEFT OF ME
7. TSUBASA TRIGGER
8. CLUB ROCK SHIT

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.







LOKA

Bar Live 301
Roubaix - France
Tuesday, November 12 2013

The final gig of *LOKA*'s *DEVA's* European tour took place in one of *Râmen Event*'s regular venues for lives: *Bar 301* in Roubaix. It's a small venue, but the acoustics are superb, drinks are affordable and you generally have enough space at the side to get rid of your bag, as well as some tables and bar stools if you prefer sitting rather than standing to watch a concert. It was, in short, a fine location to close of the European leg of their tour.

The bands certainly seemed to agree, and despite of the delay of a whopping two hours on everything, sadly including on the opening of the door which left people gathered to attend in the cold and drizzle outside for far too long, both the audience and bands playing really felt like it so everyone sort of took the tardiness in their stride.

Support band *Icons Down*, a French punk band, had the audience on their hand immediately, and by the time that LOKA hit the stage the club was buzzing with excitement and barely contained energy. The vast majority of people attending had seen LOKA one of two times before on this tour, but there were a fair few first timers too.
Regardless of how many times people had seen the band perform, their energy and musical synchronicity as well as power of performance is sure to have left a lasting impression on pretty much everyone there.

LOKA did their best to address the audience lots of times, interacting with them in various ways despite of the language barrier etc, providing a bit of a breather from all the headbanging and even bits of moshing going on in the crowd.

It was the second time we of *BCM* saw LOKA live, and we have to say that their music seems to be a lot more justified in the club circuit than at events such as *Japan Expo*. Their live there was good, but in Bar 301 it was definitely better and the band themselves seemed to enjoy it more as well.

Aside from Kihiro's lousy aim when it comes to throwing bottles in the audience (sorry dude, you had that one coming :P) this really was a gig to remember! If you like post-punk and energetic performances with an interactive singer that speaks English, this band is a recommendation should they come back to Europe.

Setlist
SLICK
2. FROM YESTERDAY
3. 11th HOUR
4. MAKE IT THROUGH
5. DON'T EVER LEAVE ME OUT
6. LEFT OF ME
7. TSUBASA TRIGGER
8.OBLIVION HEART
9. CLUB ROCK SHIT
encore
10. ALIVE
11. EVERYBODY ROCK'N ROLL
13. NAKED TO MY SOUL

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

Photographic impressions of the European leg of LOKA's DEVA's tour.

November 2013

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert, David Pleszak and Bert Van den Wyngaert. Flyer by Râmen Events.

LOKA DEVA's TOUR 2013

30.10 - Munich@Garage Deluxe (Germany)
02.11 - Cologne@Die Werkstatt (Germany)
03.11 - Brussels@Japan Expo (Belgium)
05.11 - Vienna@REPLUGGED (Austria)
07.11 - Lyon@Moko (France)
08.11 - Luxembourg@Rock Box (Luxembourg)
09.11 - Eragny(Paris)@Covent Garden (France)
10.11 - Gent@The Frontline (Belgium)
11.11 - Den Haag@Musicon (The Netherlands)
12.11 - Roubaix@Bar Live 301 (France)

www.ramen-events.com

Ryo Fujimura

Bar Live 301
6th anniversary of Râmen Events
Roubaix - France
Saturday, November 30 2013

Despite the fact that most people gathered at Roubaix' *Bar Live 301* had come to see HITT perform that evening, *Ryo Fujimura* managed to get the crowd on his hand easily with his enthusiasm and performance.

He used to be the lead vocalist of *AciD FlaVor*, and just created a new band, *RUTEN*, but for this tour he was performing solo, with nothing but his MAC laptop, some other electronics (mainly pedals), and two guitars: an electric 7 string and an acoustic one.
Creating a good mix of technology and good solid guitar play, he performed an energetic live where he proved that he could easily take on different genres and styles, ranging from instrumental, to rock with a mix of harder and softer songs.

His outgoing personality got the crowd to warm up to him immediately, and they were happy to get into his music. Frankly it's hard not to when you see someone on stage that has such a positive vibe going on and clearly loves what he's doing.

It was definitely a performance that made people wish for more, and curious about what he'll have to offer with RUTEN in the future.

Setlist:
1. Coma Medicine
2. Cocoon
3. ENISHI
4. HOSHIAI
5. ROBOU NO ISHI
6. Overload
7. Echo
8. USUBENI NO HANA
9. Nevermore
10. Better than Today
11. Foolish Butterfly
12. MATSURI NO ATO

Review by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert and Bert Van den Wyngaert.

HITT

Bar Live 301
6th anniversary of Râmen Events
Roubaix - France
Saturday, November 30 2013

HITT is one of those rare Japanese artists that frequently tours Europe. And by frequently I mean, at least once a year. It comes as no surprise that he has a very solid fan base over here. In fact this is possibly one of the biggest crowds I've ever seen at Bar Live 301 for a Japanese artist. The second HITT takes the stage and starts performing though, it is very clear why.
He's just one guy and his keyboard, supported by pre-recorded backing music and backing vocals, but that doesn't hinder him in the slightest and he performed a good mix of songs throughout the entire live. Playing several genres, ranging from Jazz to Bossa Nova and styles, from ballads to up tempo songs.

From the first note to the very last he had the entire crowd on his hand, and he has hands down one of the best performance skills I have ever seen. He got people to sing and dance along, involved the crowd by pulling several members on the first row on stage with him during his hit song *Lalilalulalola*, which was clearly a crowd favourite, to getting dragged into *A la Pêche aux Moules*, a French folk song which is an ongoing bit of a gag from *Râmen Events* CEO *Aurélie*.
HITT had no clue what was going on, but he did his best to sing along with Aurélie and the crowd regardless, trying to pick up on the lyrics and even the tune on piano as best as he could. Which proved he was a real sport and happy to go along with the crowd just as they were happy to go along with him.

If you like HITT's recorded works, you'll probably love him live, as this really is the kind of artist who's music is made for the stage, and truly comes alive when it's performed during a concert. I would definitely recommend seeing him at a venue near you if you have the chance.

Setlist:
1. Arabian Summer Giragira Night
2. Sexy Galaxy
3. Kakko tsuke Man
4. With you
5. Desire (Bossa Nova version)
6. WILD KISS (Jazz version)
7. LaLiLaLuLaLoLa
8. DAIJOUBU
9. NO SINGING NO LIFE
10.face
11. I'm crazy for you!

Encore
12. WANNA BE A ROCK STAR
13. My name is HITT

Encore 2:
14. A la Pêche aux Moules

Review and photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert.

2013.12.02 池袋EDGE

レコ発ワンマン「～SAGA～」

OPEN: 18:30 / START 19:00 / 前売 ￥3,000 / 当日 ￥3,500 ※D別

■A:2013年5月27日 高田馬場AREA Tokami物販で発売開始（No.1～50シャッフル）■B:Eプラス ■C:パソコン予約 ■D:当日券 入場順 A→B→C→D

Mini album [Liberador]

2014.01.08 release

5曲収録 / 12ページブックレット / 2,100円（税込） / 完全限定1000枚 / SWTK-4 / FWD Inc.

Starvoice Records

Tokami web 検索

http://tokami.heavy.jp/

Shoegazing genre band **BLOODTHIRSTY BUTCHERS** has been active on the indie scene for 25 years and performed with artists such as *Beck* and *Muddy Apes*, to name but two, And only last month released their 9th full album titled **YOUTH**. With music in stark contrast with the violent band name, we were intrigued and keen to know more about this musical foursome, so we spoke to this intriguing band over email.

By means of introduction, could you say something positive about each other member of the band?
Takeshi Imoriya (bass)**:** Everyone is pigheaded in a positive way.
Masahiro komatsu (drums)**:** Each member loves each instrument.
Hiasako Tabuchi (guitar)**:** The sounds that each member creates are unique, really cool, very sensuous and dramatic. I love it.

Your music is so very different, in a great way, than what your band name suggests. How and why did you choose the name *bloodthirsty butchers*?
Takeshi: *Yoshimura* (editor: the late *Hideki Yoshimura*, who is vocalist and guitarist for the band, who very recently passed away earlier this year on May 27th due to acute heart failure) named the band. I guess he liked the name in many ways at that time.
Masahiro: Yoshimura decided it on his own, it's taken from the title of a splatter movie (editor: a Japanese horror movie genre, more or less comparable to our slasher movies, but with more blood and gore).

With a name like that we can't help but wonder: are you horror/slasher movie fans?
Takeshi: I'm not very much into it, personally.
Masahiro: I like horror movies.
Hiasako: I rather hate the genre.
What is your favourite horror movie and monster?
Masahiro: The *Living Dead* series from 1986 by *George Andrew Romero*, *The Omen* series from 1976 by *Richard Donner*, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, movies like that.

You've been a band for quite a long time already, which has been the event that has left the most profound impression on you and that influences the music you create today the most?
Takeshi: When we played as an opening act for *Rage Against the Machine*, we were greeted with raucous hoots and jeers and that experience made us tough mentally, rather than musically.
Masahiro: The experience of playing with *Fugazi*.
Hiasako: I think the fact of me having become part of *bloodthirsty butchers* in itself.

"youth" is the album released in the 25th anniversary year of the band since your first tape release, congratulations, did you do anything special to celebrate when it was released on November 14th?
Takeshi: We did nothing special and I just had some booze at a Japanese pub.
Masahiro: I did nothing in particular.
Hiasako: I toasted to myself.

This is your 9th CD release already, how would you say the music of bloodthirsty butchers has evolved in all this time?
Takeshi: Whatever happened, happened, and we accepted it. I think that's it.
Masahiro: We were influenced by all who we have met. Each member also influences each other and the culmination of those influences make our music.
Hiasako: We have experienced various evolutions and changes and consequently became four, but I can always listen to each album with a fresh feeling no matter how many years pass by.

Your new album is titled *youth*, what does the concept of youth mean to you personally?
Takeshi: About us, ourselves.
Masahiro: Greenness.
Hiasako: I imagine "youth", for this album, shows the feeling which is perverse and out of control with struggling.

Just from listening to youth I can tell that there is a lot of integrity to your music, and in a world filled with noise it's almost like an oasis of peace. How do you specifically go about creating a new song?
Takeshi: It was actually the same as usual. I think each member had their own thoughts, but we developed it all together.
Masahiro: I personally created with a feeling of combining myself how I am now and how I was in the past.
Hiasako: We have been playing together for many years but each member always creates "new" sounds. And every time we work together to create the best piece ever.

How do you hope your music will inspire the listener?
Takeshi: I want people know our music rather than influence somebody.
Masahiro: There are good things and bad things that happen in life but I want someone to feel this moment is the moment of reality when they listen to our music.
Hiasako: I hope someone listens to our music but not as a means of a temporary escape or way to forget something. I want them to have some sort of courage so they know there is someone that is trying to step forward even if they face up to the bad things or difficulties. Also, I hope someone plays in a band and notices that everyone can create good pieces even after they have played for a long time, in addition to the happiness that comes with the pursuit of music.

Earlier this year you have performed with *Muddy Apes*, could you tell us a little more about the experience?
Masahiro: Their way of expressing music is a bit different from ours but I felt that they are energetic and know how to make the audience excited.
Hiasako: I was happy to hear that they think our music is cool. Their genre is different from ours but we can feel something in each other and they are really cool.

What do you hope to accomplish for the band in 2014?
Hiasako: I hope we can share youth with as many people as possible.

The cover of youth is an interesting piece of modern art, could you tell us a little more about how you came to collaborate with the artist and why you choose this piece in particular for the CD jacket?
Takeshi: Yoshimura knew people residing in *Shobu Gakuen* (editor: Shobu Gakuen is a rehabilitation facility for people with developmental difficulties. Residents create stunning textile art as well as craft work of all kinds [www.shobu.jp]) and by chance their pieces had a strong feeling that was right so to use for this album.
Hiasako: And because we felt it fits to this album.

Which is your favourite style of art and artist?
Takeshi: Mr Y*oshitomo Nara*. I always appreciate his cooperation and understanding.
Masahiro: *M.C. Escher*.
Hiasako: The art that in itself is very close to the artist themselves and the artist who can create something to exactly express themselves.

As a closing note, could you tell our readers something about the band that is not commonly known?
Takeshi: Stereo image.
Hiasako: When *Imoriya*, our bassist, is drunk, his steps are really funny and awesome.

Official site: www.bloodthirsty-butchers.com
Official facebook: facebook.com/pages/Official_bloodthirsty-butchers/118339138305240

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Japanese translation and photography provided by King Records.
Many thanks to Bloodthirsty Butchers and King Records.

BLUE CLOUD's message of hope and happiness

Japanese emo punk band **BLUE CLOUD** not only played their first gig in Belgium at Japan Expo Belgium, but also their very first European concerts in general. We spoke to them in between lives at the convention to find out a little more about the band.

How did you come up with the name BLUE CLOUD?
KYO'N (vocals & rhythm guitar): Well there's a blue sky with white clouds, but if you'd colour the clouds blue too, you'd have a fully blue sky *smiles*. To us that is sort of like a message of hope and happiness for our fans.

How do you performing here in Europe will inspire and influence your future works?
TOBI (drums): The confidence we have gained from this experience will definitely shine through. Especially now that we're international stars *laughs*!

You're a punk band, which means your audience contains some moshers and crowd surfers, were you very surprised to see the difference in the Belgian mosh pit compared to the Japanese?
WATAK (lead guitar): Our music is a gentler style of punk, so maybe it is because of that, but our audience yesterday (editor: they performed on both the Friday and Saturday of Japan Expo Belgium) was very kind and gentle. We didn't see any kind of violence amongst them so there wasn't a big difference with the Japanese audience.

Instruments are vital for a musician, which is your favourite instrument or piece of equipment that you own or the favourite brand you like to play?
TOBI: I can get pretty enthusiastic behind my drum kit, so I definitely need sticks with a good grip so I don't loose them when playing. Otherwise I risk them slipping and flying out of my hands *laughs*.
KYO'N: I'm a lefty, so I need a guitar for left handed people *smiles*.
G.I. (bass): I have a *Fender* custom shop bass.
WATAK: I'm especially peculiar about the humbucker pick-ups on my guitar.

You've also met your fans at this event, which fan stood out the most and why?
WATAK: A Japanese girl that's in Brussels as an exchange student. When she came to meet us she spoke with us in Japanese and we understood each other perfectly, that was fun.

What message do you hope to pass to the listener via your music?
WATAK: We hope that we can inspire those that listen to our music. For those that don't understand Japanese, we hope that the music by itself will be able to accomplish that. And we hope that those that do understand the lyrics will be inspired by both the song texts as well as the music that accompanies them.

What was the first thing you thought about Belgium arriving here?
KYO'N: The streets here are so wide! They're easily three times as wide as those in Japan.
TOBI: The cold! It's so cold here! It's still a lot warmer in Japan!
The rest of the band started nodding in agreement and saying they thought it was pretty cold in Belgium as well.

Did you know a lot about Belgium and Brussels in particular before coming here?
TOBI: *Without even thinking* beer and chocolate!
WATAK: And waffles!
G.I.: I remember watching a World Cup match where Belgium played Japan. I think it was the 2002 world championship soccer.

As a closing note, what would you like our readers to know about BLUE CLOUD that isn't commonly known?
TOBI: Oh tidbits of information about us aren't important!
WATAK: *bursts out into laughter.*
TOBI: What's important is that people listen to our music *smiles*.

Official site: bluecloud09.web.fc2.com
Official twitter: @BLUECLOUD_

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert, in collaboration with Hotensai.fr
Photography by Hilde Heyvaert (live photo) and Bert Van den Wyngaert (band photo).
Japanese translation by Marty and Benjamin Nouvel.
Many thanks to Japan Expo and Dan Orlowitz.

LOKA

More to the world of Japanese music than Visual kei.

PUNK BAND **LOKA** GRACED THE BELGIAN, AND EUROPEAN STAGES FOR THE EUROPEAN LEG OF THEIR **DEVA'S TOUR** DURING NOVEMBER, ROCKING THE PODIUM EVERYWHERE THEY WENT. BCM SPOKE TO THEM AFTER THEIR CONCERT AT JAPAN EXPO BELGIUM TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT WHAT DRIVES THE GROUP.

LOKA means the world, or universe in Sanskrit, why did you choose this name in particular?

KIHIRO (vocals): With my previous band I toured the US, China, Taiwan and some other countries, but we've I've never been to any of the others and there's so many. So I wanted to create a band that would be a world class band. Not just an international touring band, but I do have hopes that this band would you know, go to the entire world *smiles*.

Sanskrit is associated primarily with Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, are you interested in any of these religions?

KIHIRO: We're not really religious. To us the word and the meaning, the world, just looked cool. We're more spiritual than religious. You know, there's all these different gods in these different religions, and I think that's very cool. So we may use it in our music as part of an art.

Kihiro, you grew up in the US, how do you feel that having lived there for so long influences you as a musician?

Laughs I don't really know in how far it influences me as a musician. I suppose it does in a sense as I choose to sing all my lyrics in English and I never used to write in Japanese as much. But after starting this band, I started to write some texts in Japanese. Mostly I think that I've been influenced when it comes to personality *laughs*. I'm a little American in my head whilst on the outside I'm Japanese.

This is your first European tour, what are your greatest expectations from it?

Sin (guitar): What we hope the most is that the European public will realise that there are genres of Japanese rock that aren't *Visual kei*. As Visual kei is something that really marks J-rock and it's such a representative style. But it's really not the only kind of rock music coming from Japan.

How do you think that this tour will inspire and influence your future works?

KIHIRO: It's hard to say right now, we've not really played enough dates yet. I think we'll learn a lot from the atmosphere. I'm not talking about general things such as buildings and the sky. And other than the gear. Like the different stages we'll perform on and the people: how they react. Everything is totally different than in Japan. The way people treat you is totally different than in Japan, and we all really need to start to cope with that. At this point we only did three shows and we still have seven more to go as we have ten shows in total. Once we get through this I'm sure we'll be thinking differently about how to perform our music so that will be very different after the tour I think.

You've performed a couple of dates of the tour already, what has been your impression of the European audiences so far?

Kihiro: There's a lot of headbangers. That's good!

You've not seen a wall of death or a really crazy moshpit yet?

Kihiro: *smiles* no not yet, but that we definitely want to see! There's many girls though so that's kind of hard to create those *laughs*.

Actually over here girls generally just participate in whatever's going on.

Kihiro: That's awesome! It's just, our impression is a bit coloured by the Vk fans in Japan I suppose. They don't stage dive, they don't crowd surf, they don't mosh. They hate that shit! So I don't know about Europeans, are you ok with that?

Oh yeah, crowd surfing, stage diving, wall of death, the whole deal, whatever the venue allows and is suitable for may happen.

Kihiro: That's awesome! I hope it's gonna get harder from this point on then *laughs* I look forward to that!

How would you compare performing at an event like *Japan Expo Belgium* to performing a normal live?

Kihiro: The distance between the crowd. There's quite a distance here because of the safety zone. In regular clubs you're right besides the first rows of the crowd when you're on stage. When we played a festival in Taiwan it was the same situation as with Japan Expo Belgium. We have to perform totally differently.

Would you say it's harder to perform at a festival like this?
Kihiro: No it's not really harder, it's just different. Aside from the technical side, that is harder because the bigger the stage the better your equipment needs to be. But I could go on about that aspect for ages. It really all boils down to how you go into these things.

Instruments are vital for a musician, which is your favourite instrument or piece of equipment that you own or the favourite brand you like to play?
Sin: I play guitars by *COMBAT* Japan.
KEN'ICHI (drums)**:** *Tama Drums*, also the Japanese make.
Kihiro: My voice *laughs*. My favourite brand of mike is *Audix* though.
Katsumi (bass)**:** My bass is by *ESP* *smiles*.

Coming to Europe on tour I imagine that it's not easy to bring all your equipment across, on what do you base the selection that stays home and what stays behind?
Kihiro: We wanted to bring everything but the airplane company wouldn't let us *laughs*. So we just brought the things we really and obviously need, such as the bass and the guitar and several pedals and spare strings. It's the hardest on KEN'ICHI so we couldn't bring all of his equipment along. Seeing his kit's pedals are custom fitted to him, we brought those along. We should have brought the snare too but it is how it is. First priority is bringing things that are fit to us mostly and the rest we just bring what we can.

You've also met your fans at this event, which fan stood out the most and why?
Sin: All the girls!
KEN'ICHI nods in agreement.
Kihiro: All those guys just screaming at the top of their lungs, surrounded by all those girls. Those are cool and I'll remember them.
Katsumi: The girls making heart signs with their hands. We call them the "heart mark girls".

What do you hope to inspire in the fans the most with your music?
Kihiro: It doesn't matter what country you come from, it's not easy to tour Europe. It doesn't just happen overnight. A lot of hard work goes before that, and we've all been in the music scene for a very long time. I've said it on stage today and I really mean it: just keep at it, doing it and just believe in what you do. You can do it. You also have to be smart I guess *smiles*.

In your video for the fans you talked about Belgian waffles and chocolate, but what about the beer?
Sin: It tastes good!
KEN'ICHI: That it does!
Katsumi: I agree! My favourite Belgian beer is Jupiler.
Kihiro: I like the alcohol content of it, it's a lot higher than that of Japanese beer.
All jesting aside what was your first thought about the country arriving here?
Sin: That the city is elegant.
KEN'ICHI: Very nice looking buildings too.
Kihiro: The cobblestones. And how it feels when you drive over them in a car.
Katsumi: Where are the waffle shops?! I thought there'd be waffle shops all over the place but I've not seen a single one yet, it's very disillusioning *chuckles*.

Is there anything on this tour you'd definitely like to see or do, aside from performing of course?
Sin: I had this long list of things I wanted to see and do, but then the tour started and I realised the schedule would be far too strict and hectic I just sort of threw that out of the window *smiles*.
Kihiro: I have one. I've been taking pictures of the emergency exit signs as they're all different. So I'm making a collection of all the different ones as they're so different everywhere *starts doing an impression of the poses of man on the sign he's seen so far and laughs*.

As a closing note, what would you like to tell our readers about LOKA that isn't commonly known?
Sin: We're actually really serious *laughs*.
KEN'ICHI: Aside from Kihiro, we're actually very shy.
Kihiro: I love onigiri *smiles*.
Katsumi: I live in Japan *laughs*.

Official site: loka-official.com
Official facebook: facebook.com/LokaOfficial
Official twitter: @LOKAofficial

Interview and photography by Hilde Heyvaert.
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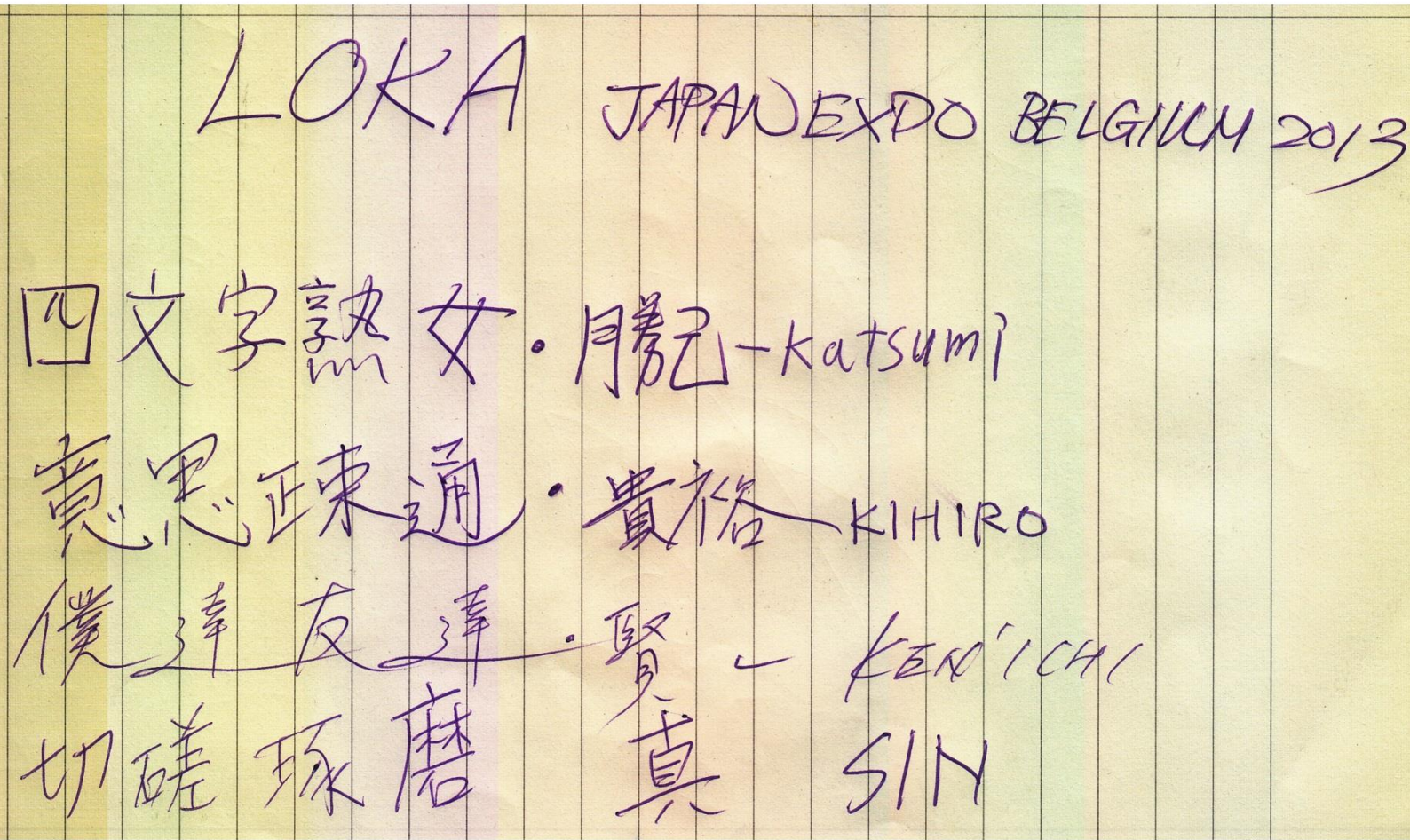

Syntzyet

Synk;yet

SYNK;YET HAD SOME SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES IN 2013 WITH THEIR VERY FIRST ONE MAN LIVE AND A NEW GUITARIST.
2014 PROMISES TO BE ANOTHER YEAR OF MANY NEW THINGS, SO WE ASKED THEM A LITTLE MORE ABOUT ALL OF THESE EXCITING CHANGES.

Quite a few things happend for Synk;yet in 2013: you released an EP, intensively performed in Tokyo, what are your plans for 2014?
liki (vocals)**:** Right now, I'm just trying to aim higher and take bold steps when it comes to clearing things one at a time.
rino (guitar and piano)**:** The success of our upcoming *Takadanobaba AREA* one man live!
shiori (bass)**:** The success of our second one-man live on July 20 2014 is my greatest aim right now. We will also release a new single coming April and a full album in August.
kouji (drums)**:** The success of the Takadanobaba AREA one-man live, and to rack it up even more from there.

You were joined on guitar by *Iyo/yukimura* of *Xrista* and formerly of *OROCHI*, how did this collaboration come to be?
liki: The previous collaboration we did was probably the trigger for him joining as a full member in the end. He is such an impressive guitarist on stage so I found my eyes were drawn to him.
yuiha (formerly known as Iyo/yukimura)**:** It all started from the moment I was introduced to the band by the president of *Starwave Records*, *Kiwamu Kai*. Previously, we shared the same model of guitar that rino plays and we've also met up because we have mutual friends. I always thought Synk;yet is a really cool band so I'm really happy to be a member now.
rino: In the first place Kiwamu-san, our boss, took an interest in him and introduced him to us. After that we had a few rounds of *Band Battle* and through that I managed to talk to him more.
shiori: The first time we met was at the MISARUKA one-man live held at *Ikebukuro CYBER*. yuiha came to watch the gig also and Kiwamu introduced him. He has been our support guitarist since the concert at *Ikebukuro EDGE* on June 5 and he joined us officially at the November 18 one-man live.
kouji: We have been collaborating for a long time, so I guess we can say that 's how it started.

Everyone knows your stage costumes, but what kind of fashion do you prefer to wear in daily life?
liki: Normally I don't really pay attention to fashion but I do take care that my clothes and I are clean.
yuiha: Nothing special in particular.
rino: I have quite a few stage outfits that reveal my stomach and show off my abs and legs. In daily life I'm the opposite and I like wearing normal things like t-shirts and jumpers *laughs*.
shiori: My stage outfits and daily wear are opposites. For instance, today's outfit is to welcome yuiha and symbolises the start of the new Synk;yet. Which is why I'm wearing a completely black outfit with dark visual aspects. It's a first though, and it's something which I've yet to try with the band.
kouji: Basically it'll be something simple. I don't really wear anything that is too fancy or looks too much like a costume.

If you weren't musicians, what kind of job would you be doing?
liki: I often thought about this before. I think I'd be an ordinary salaryman and would have a pretty smooth life up to this point.
yuiha: I can't even think about it, but I have to say that it'd be cool to be in a job that allows me to drive an expensive red sports car.
rino: I think I'd aim to be either a salaryman or a teacher in a school or tuition centre.
shiori: I'd be either a programmer or sound engeneer.
kouji: I think I'd be an ordinary employee of a company.

Starwave Records bands often form collaborations with others on the label for projects, who would you like to work with in the future?
liki: There used to be a project to let label artists sing the songs by other artists on the same label during karaoke sessions. I think it might be interesting if we could have a member exchange project.
yuiha: We did a collaboration with *Agato*, *Ichika* and *1000* from *Tokami* and *Peko* from *Capella*. We only joined Starwave Records not that long ago therefore I would prefer to concentrate on Synk;yet's works first. But on the other hand I would love to do collaboration with other artists also.
rino: *Rui* from *MISARUKA* also plays the piano like me, so I'll really like to try some collaboration involving the piano with him.
shiori: I'd like to collaborate with an idol. Collaborating with other musicians seems really interesting too.
kouji: I would like to do a member exchange and perform some songs with *Matenrou Opera*.

Synk;yet is still a relatively new band, but what of all the things you've done so far are you most proud of?
liki: I think the live *Shikkoku no symphony* was the highlight. I felt that something within me had grown when I stood on that big stage.
yuiha: All *MESSIAH*, which is the band's nickname for our fans.
shiori: My fellow band members who are with me no matter when, and also all MESSIAH!
rino: It has to be the success of our one-man live that was held recently at *Ikebukuro EDGE* on November 18!
kouji: The first time we get to hold a one-man live, because after all, it was ours and the first.

What's the best compliment a fan has ever given you?
liki: It really makes me very happy when people tell me things like "I got a lot of positive energy from listening to your songs".
yuiha: I'm really happy when people tell me things like "I'm really happy I came for the live. Thank you."
rino: As I'm mainly in charge of the music composition, I'm very delighted when people tell me that the songs I've worked on so hard are good.
shiori: I'm happy with any feedback or compliment, but I'd probably also be happy when I'd receive some sort of advice that we can put into consideration in our future plans.
kouji: When people tell me they've really enjoyed the concert.

What do you hope to inspire in people that listen to your music?
liki: I feel that different people will develop different feelings towards our songs. There is no right or wrong about this. Anyway, I am happy that people are able to feel something from listening to our songs.
yuiha: The legend of Eden.
rino: The unexpected.
shiori: I want to continue to bring about shock and emotions in the listeners.
kouji: That would be life itself.

If literally anything was possible. What would you like to do with the band in 2014?
liki: In 2014 we want to have a momentum we never had till now. I'd like the band to be at a level where it will keep other bands at bay.
yuiha: A world tour. Realistically, however, I'd just like the Takadanobaba one-man live on July 20th to be a success. And for the band to step up a level. In order to do that, we need the fans', even the European ones, support. So if you can, please come to Synk;yet's concerts!
rino: A world tour.
shiori: Specifically, I'd like the one-man in July to be a success.
kouji: A concert in Tokyo Dome that's a full house!

As a closing note, is there anything about the band that is not commonly known that you would like to share with our readers?
liki: Things that are not known by others are not meant to be told as they are a secret.
yuiha: I always prepare a pair of showy victory pants for concerts *laughs*.
rino: Although we based our activities in Tokyo, everyone feels that Tokyo is very far away from home.
shiori: I am pretty knowledgeable when it comes to computers and the internet.
kouji: I am a mayonnaise lover.

Official site: http://synkyet.com
Official facebook: www.facebook.com/synkyetofficial

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photography by Akio Yokoyama.
Japanese translations by Esther Huang and Kyde Lariel.
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HTT
No Singing,
No Life

HITT IS BACK IN EUROPE ON A NEW TOUR, CELEBRATING THE 6TH ANNIVERSARY OF *RÂMEN EVENTS* AND WITH A NEW EP **NO SINGING, NO LIFE**, WHERE HE DISPLAYS A WHOLE NEW SIDE OF HIMSELF WITH DIFFERENT MUSICAL STYLES AND THE REWORKING OF SEVERAL OF HIS OLDER SONGS, AS WELL AS NEW ONES. HIGH TIME TO CATCH UP WITH HIM AGAIN TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT HIS PLANS AND LATEST RELEASE.

Your new EP *No Singing, No Life* has just been released in Europe, what are your greatest expectations for this release?
Up to this moment, this is the warmest and most acoustic CD I've released. Before I used to sing in a rougher way vocally, it was a bit more Rock. This is much simpler, back to the basics if you will. Like for instance, I only used the piano as accompanying instrument for my vocals when I wrote these songs.

You recorded the new EP in France, what made you chose to record it in Europe rather than in Japan?
I actually recorded half of it in Japan and half of it in France. My friend *Béranger*, who lives in Lille, helped me record the songs I did here in France in his studio. I had some time on the last tour that went on in the spring and the opportunity presented itself so I just went with it *laughs*. It's great to have friends in Europe so that I can do things like this *smiles*.

You rerecorded new versions of several songs on this album, why did you choose these songs in particular?
Béranger and I talked about it when we started recording and we chose the songs together. Of course I could do all new songs, but at that time I really wanted to do a new version of some of my existing songs and completely remake them. So for example I did a *Bossa Nova* version of *Desire*, this way I could show a new aspect of all the songs I redid.
I also released a new single in Japan this year called *WILD KISS* that wasn't released in Europe. So I thought that my European fans would like to listen to it as well. But seeing that this album is more mature and acoustic, I wanted to show another side of this song as well, which is why I chose for a Jazz version of the original. I thought that just really worked better on *No Singing, No Life* *smiles*.

Who are your favourite Jazz artists?
I don't really know artists within the Jazz genre, the same goes for Bossa Nova or Rock really. It's more about how I feel a genre rather than being inspired by people in it. It's the same with *LaLiLaLuLaLoLa* which is a *Flamenco* style song. I was really inspired by the vibe of that genre and the handclapping, so I wanted to do something with that. It's all about the vibe of the genre that finally becomes my own original take on it.

You're best known for playing the bass and the piano, as well as being a vocalist, how do you go about creating a new song?
It's really a very simple process that starts with me getting inspiration for a new song, which can literally be anywhere, even when I'm on the toilet, taking a shower or driving *laughs*. And then I start humming and singing the tune when I think it could be a great song, almost like a child really *laughs*. At that point I'm not using instruments, I add the piano afterwards. So mainly it all starts with humming *smiles*.

What the greatest thing that has happened to you on this tour so far?
It's still early on in the tour at this point so I can't really pinpoint anything just yet. I hope it will be full of positive things and happy moments *smiles*. I am having a good time though!

You come to Europe at least once a year and mostly work people that speak French, how good is your French at this point?
I'd say it's about as good as my English when it comes to understanding the language, but I can probably speak English a bit better as I get more practise in that. My knowledge of French is very basic. I do really like the phrase "ça va" though. I love to say it because it's so versatile. You can say it almost like a greeting, like "what's up". But at the same time it's full of kindness, tenderness and warmth because when someone isn't feeling their best and you're worried, you can also use it to enquire after them.

Of all the times you've been in Europe and all the cities you've seen, what has left the biggest impression on you?
I would have to say both the French city of *Etretat*, which is in *Normandy* near the sea. And then *Lac Léman* in Suisse.

You often meet your fans at concerts and events and fans often give gifts to the artist they come to meet, what was the nicest gift you've ever received?
Drawings! Oh wait, I have a great gift to show you *goes to search his bag and gets out a cute crocheted doll made to resemble him*. I got this in Nancy last week, it's an amigurumi HITT doll *smiles*!

What kind of gift always makes you happy?
I love handmade gifts. I especially love it when fans draw my portrait or make a plushie that resembles me because when they make those, they really have me in mind and that really makes me happy *smiles*.

Could you tell us a little more about your plans for 2014?
I don't know about Europe yet as I've not made any plans for that. But as far as Japan is concerned, I want to release a new single. I will also perform street lives and lives in cafés as well as do a big one man in a large venue. I need to talk about that more with my staff. To make that big event succeed I will do as many appearances as possible and do as much promotion as I can so people get to know my work really well. I've never been able to do large promotional events with my company up 'till now, so I'm hoping to change that with street lives and gigs in café. Doing things like that will really help getting my music out there. It's almost like I'm a beginner all over again, but I feel really good about this and I think the results will definitely pay off for the effort *smiles*.

As a closing note, could you tell us something about yourself that isn't commonly known?
Laughs and lifts up his leg to illustrate his point. Well I love ripped jeans, but I'm a guy so obviously I have a lot of leg hair. Like all guys. So to be presentable when I wear things like this, I shave my legs *laughs*.

Official site: http://megahitt.com
Official facebook: www.facebook.com/megahitt

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Japanese translations by Sophie Debusne.
Photography by Aurélie Vandecasteele and Bert Van den Wyngaert (live photo).
Many thanks to Râmen Events.

I WANNA BE A ROCKSTAR!

RYO FUJIMURA

Never abandoning
the guitar

Ryo Fujimura isn't a new name when it comes to Japanese artists touring Europe. Having visited several times with AciD FlavoR and now touring with *Râmen Events* solo, and hopefully back soon with his new band RUTEN, we spoke to him after his concert in Roubaix, France, to talk about his plans, himself and of course, his music.

For the people that don't know you yet, could you introduce yourself in 5 words?
Five words? Only five? Oh that's hard, I'm not sure I can manage. Can't I have more *laughs*?
Ok you can.
I'm *Ryo Fujimura* from Tokyo, Japan. I was born on February 24, 1981. I'm a romantic pisces *smiles*. I used to be in *AciD FlavoR* and now I'm in the rock band *RUTEN*.

You were one of the first artists that came to Europe with *Râmen Events*, so how does it feel to be back for their 6th anniversary?
I've performed here in Roubaix before, two and half years ago. Last year and the year before I went to Mexico to play several concerts. I wanted to come back sooner, but it's difficult to make it over. So I'm really happy that I could finally make it back to Europe.

Your English is excellent, where did you learn the language so well?
Thank you *smiles*. I didn't study it in college or anything like that, but I did take English classes in junior high and high school as in Japan we do learn the language there. So that's where I got the basis. And aside from that I just picked up more as life went along, I don't think my English is that good so there's still room for improvement and more practise *smiles*.

What has been the best thing about this tour so far?
I love performing in the different venues and at different J-culture events. It's all different, the big ones have a large stage and great lighting. But I also love the small clubs where you're close to the audience and you can really feel their passion as well. So for me personally, I'd have to say the lives themselves and performing them.

What do you know about Belgium, aside from beer, chocolate or waffles?
The fashion culture. Especially that originating in Antwerp with the MoMu fashion museum, the fashion academy and of course the Antwerp Six. Last time I was here I went to Antwerp to do some sightseeing but sadly I was on a very tight schedule so I really hope that this time I'll be able to make the time to really go check it all out.

You mentioned that you love Antwerp fashion culture, so who's your favourite designer.
Oh no, I'm so bad at remembering names, I really don't have the brain for that. I love the works of the Antwerp Six, but I just really can not remember their names other than Dries Van Noten. I'm not very good with names sadly so you'll have to help me out *smiles* (editor: the Antwerp Six are Walter Van Beirendonc, Dirk Bikkembergs, Dirk Van Saene, Ann De Meulemeester, Marina Yee and Dries Van Noten, we did get 5 out of 6 in the end, but sadly neither of us could remember Ann De Meulemeester).

You play the guitar and make use of a lot of technology on stage, could you ever see yourself take the step from a traditional instrument towards a guitar such as the Misa Kitara which operates on Linux much like a computer?
I'm not excluding the possibility but I'd have to try a Misa Kitara to know for sure. And I suppose it also depend on what I need at that moment. So I'd have to say I would consider it.
The guitars I currently use are an acoustic *Gibson* which is made in Canada. I actually bought that from Royze Musik in Lille. My electric guitar is a 7-string by *Ibanez*, so it has a wider ranger than a normal, traditional 6-string, which I find really important for my playing.

What of Europe has left the biggest impression on you?
Five years ago I performed at J*apan Expo Paris* with AciD FlavoR. That was only our second concert in Europe at the time. But the entire audience seemed to think in Japanese, so it was a truly amazing experience. I don't think think the crowd noticed, but when I played the guitar on that stage I cried. Their reception is definitely what left the biggest impression on me to date from all things in Europe.

How do you think this tour will influence your future works?
This year I'm starting my new band RUTEN with three of my close friends that will be drummer, bassist and guitarist. I really want to show them the European audiences, venues and just Europe full stop. But also Mexico. I really want to share all the good experiences from these tours with them so I hope I'll be able to bring them here so they can experience them as well. So simply being here will positively impact RUTEN because I'll be able to share all these experiences with my friends that are also my fellow band members *smiles*.

What are the biggest challenges of performing on stage on your own with just your computer as your back-up?
There are both positive and negative aspects of a computer sound compared to a band sound, and it is definitely totally different to being in a band. It means that if I wanted to play for instance, a reggae drum and bass sound or a reggae techno sound it's just a matter of imputing my guitar. Of course it's a bit more difficult with my voice *laughs*. But the electronics at the same time are quite liberating in combination with my guitar as I can easily choose what I want to play. In that way it's actually easier than being in a band. I definitely don't need as many rehearsals as I need to with a band *laughs*.

Do you think you will still do a lot of solo performances like you did today now that you're in a band?
Honestly now that I'm in RUTEN I mainly want to focus on that in the future. The band really is my priority. If I still do solo stuff I'll probably do acoustic sets with just the piano, as I can play that as well, and the acoustic guitar. I'm not sure what will become of my electronic work, I'll have to talk about that with my band and see.

Of all the equipment and instruments you own, which is your favourite piece?
The most important to me is my 7-strings guitar by Ibanez. I bought it in 2000, so it's 13 years old now. It's gone on every single tour with me, so I'd never abandon that one.

As a closing note, do you have a message for our readers?
First of all I would like to thank the readers for being interested in Japanese culture. In Japan the image of Belgium is pretty much only beer, chocolate and waffles, which is a shame. Some people, like me, are very interested in the fashion as well, but aside from that the knowledge about your country is sadly limited. So I'm glad to know that many Belgian people have interest in my culture and that there's a good Japanese movement. It may sometimes seem like the heighdays are over, but the people that remain are very true to it, and I hope that they'll remain as passionate and interested in Japanese culture and music in the future. And thank you for taking the time to read this interview *smiles*.

Official site: www.ryofujimura.com
Official facebook: www.facebook.com/ryofujimura
Official twitter: @ryofujimura

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert. Photography by Bert Van den Wyngaert. Many thanks to Râmen Events.

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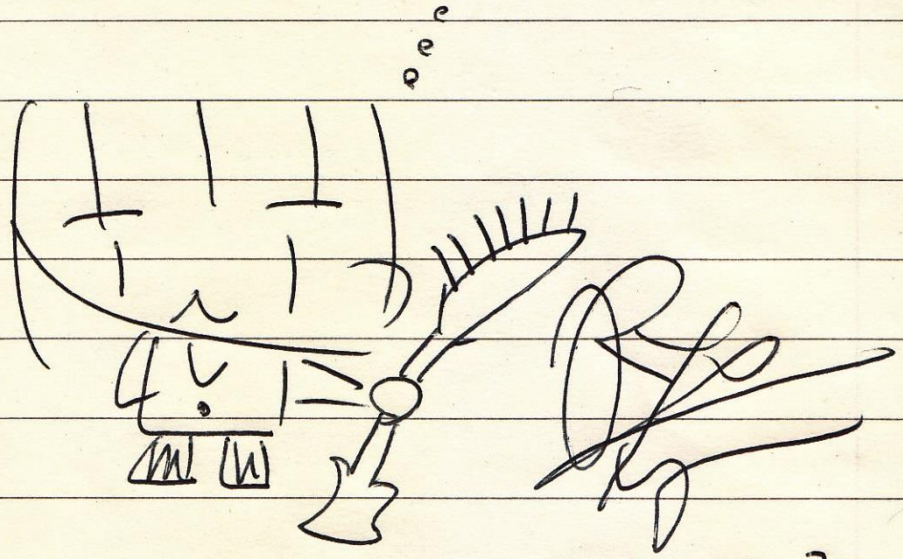


2013.11.30

- Guillaume **LAPEYRE** -

- Rémi **GUERIN** -

CITY·HALL

TOME 04

ankama

City Hall is a French steampunk manga (franga) where paper is the most dangerous thing in the world as everything written on it comes to life. In this neo-Victorian world full of mechanical marvels and monsters our lead characters battle with fantasy and reality alike to save the day. Wanting to find out more about what drives this fantastic story, we spoke with the creative geniuses behind City Hall, writer *Rémi Guerin* and artist *Guillaume Lapeyre* about the tale they are weaving.

City Hall is a marvellous and imaginative combination of history, fiction and steampunk, what inspired you to start this story together?
Rémi: As surprising as it may seem, but it's an English building, set in the very heart of London that forms the basis of this story: the London city hall. I confess that I am fascinated by the incredible architecture that borders the river Thames and it was after seeing a report that the idea took root, and sometime later the story itself. Aside from that I dream of going there and offering *Tome 1* of City Hall to the mayor of London right there in that building! So I wanted to create my very own *league of extraordinary gentlemen*, but with real, historical characters, the first being *Jules Verne*. From there onwards the story continued taking form.

Why did you choose a manga style format in greyscale for publication?
Guillaume: Once we completed our previous series (*Explorers* aux *éditions soleil*), we needed to present new projects to our editors. We had prepared several stores, all different from one another. One of those was City Hall. I had discovered graphic novels along with manga and I succeeded in convincing Rémi into doing City Hall as a manga project. All the other stories were treated like classic graphic novels in colour. *Ankama* (the publisher of City Hall) immediately showed interest, the others thought that the manga format wouldn't be economically viable. So we had the extraordinary opportunity to have people behind us that were willing to accept this enormous risk. Starting from the very first day we worked as hard as we could so they wouldn't regret having confidence in us!

Two of your main characters are *Jules Verne* and *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*, which story by each of them is your personal favourite and why?
Rémi: Now that's an excellent question! My favourite story by the hand of Jules Verne would be "*Around the World in 80 days*", because that has all the absolute elements of adventure, based on a crazy and foolish bet, which is at the same time a stroke of genius and visionary of what will become the future. It's more complicated when talking about Arthur Conan Doyle as I am a great Sherlock Holmes fan. There are so many new stories as well as original ones so it's hard to choose. But if I had to choose one that particularly pleased me because it reflects the character and his way of operating well then I would say "*Five Orange Pips*".

If you could have one thing from City Hall come to exist in real life, which would it be?
Guillaume: Buying a ticket of the *Indigo* class for the *Canon Train Company* for a crossing from the UK to France! You'll see what I mean if you read *Tome 4* *smiles*.
Rémi: Going to a show by *Harry Houdini* in London, a dream that will sadly never come true, much to my great regret!

France has a very rich steampunk culture, with many very public elements to it such as *Les Machines de L'île* in Nantes to name but one, which one is your personal favourite and why?
Guillaume: We were able to visit Les Machines de L'île, as we were in Nantes for a convention and that was fabulous. We even decided to include it in the end of *Tome 3*! I would have loved staying a little longer and discovering the city of Jules Verne a little more.
Rémi: I agree with Guillaume! Nantes was a fabulous experience, which was sadly far too short. We did adore it and I do think that at the moment that it is my best steampunk experience in France to date. Aside from the City Hall stand of course *winks*.

For Comic Con Paris you collaborated with *Steam Rocket* on a City Hall display, how did you come to work with this group?
Rémi: It was our editor who presented them to us and it turned out that they loved our work and we loved theirs. So it seemed logical we'd do something together.

If you could organise the ultimate City Hall event, which steampunk artists would you like to work with, what kind of event would it be?
Guillaume: A mechanical parade? ...No that'd be too fantastic ...I think I dream a little too much...
Rémi: A reconstruction of the London city hall during a universal exposition like the one we discover in Tome 3, but that's an ultimate dream!

The latest installment, *Tome 4*, was released in Autumn of 2013, along with some new merchandise of the series, can you tell us as little more about these?
Rémi: Tome 4 was released October 24th, as well as a boxed set of the first cycle grouping the 3 first tomes of the series, including a little bonus! There's also a notebook that was released with exclusive content in the form of texts and drawings and plenty of space to pen down your very own adventure!

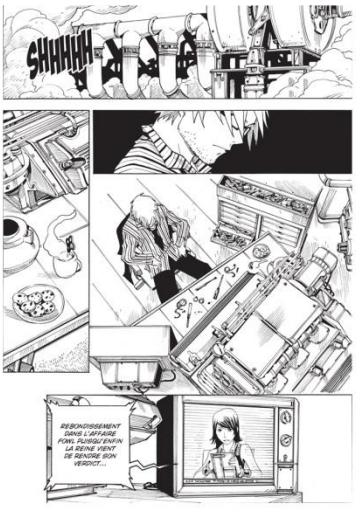
Currently City Hall is only available in French, are there any plans for translations in other languages?
Rémi: Yes, negotiations for translations in Spanish, Italian and German with foreign editors are currently underway. And as I write this, the text of Tome 1 should already have been translated in English!

As a closing note, do you have any words of wisdom f or our readers? Especially those that are aspiring artists themselves?
Guillaume: for the designers amongst you: be curious about everything. Draw everything you love and everything you think is a good subject. Draw more, more and even more, all the time. Don't be overconfident, but be confident enough to show your work to editors. Make sure to work regularly. Be passionate about what you do, because once you work as a professional you risk spending many hours in front of a page, pencil in hand and ready to make your wildest dreams become reality *smiles*!
Rémi: The same goes for scenario writers. Let anything you could possibly read, see or hear inspire you. Be curious to the extreme, talk to people and ask them about their lives. Let them tell you stories, read as much as possible and keep an open mind towards all genres. You'll find your own way afterwards and it'll be because of what you loved, what you didn't really love, what surprised you and what you didn't hear. Be open and have no prejudice before discovering whatever it may be, life is an adventure and writing is a way of sharing that. And especially, never be discouraged. Even if you're unpublished: write for others, be they your friends, your family or people you don't know. But in the first place: write for yourself.

Official facebook: facebook.com/pages/City-Hall/422132707841804
Official twitter: @JVcityhall

City Halln is available from both the Ankama online shop and your regular manga seller such as specialised stores or Amazon.fr
Other language translations coming in the future!

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Excerpts from City Hall Tome 4 provided by Ankama.



ERGI:

Daring to stand out in the crowd

Swedisch indi brand **Ergi** is known for their whimsical and quirky designs, often with a touch of piracy or history to them as well as distributing other brands from both fellow indi designers as well as Japan.
We spoke to designer **Eva**, who was so kind to take out the time from the pre-release business of her "**Sleipnir**" print to tell us a little more about **Ergi by Piratesan**.

Ergi is a really catchy name, could you explain what it means?
The word *ergi* is old Norse, with many different meanings and interpretations. The closest translation to English would probably be "queer". When I founded the brand I wanted a name that started with the same letter as my name, *Eva*, as well as something old and Scandinavian. I'm also a fan of weird Japanese brand names, such as *Sex Pot Revenge*. They sort of make sense, but on the other hand they really don't. Same thing with Ergi.

If you were to sum up Ergi in 5 words, which would you choose?
Historical, Cute, Unique, Customisable, Daring to stand out in the crowd. I totally failed at five words at the end there.

You're also into pirates, who are your favourite fictional and historical pirate?
Fictional: *Morgan Adams*. The cheesy movie *Cutthroat Island* was what got me into the whole pirate thing as a child. I still love that movie.
Historical, this one is much harder for me to choose. In real life most pirates seem to have been pretty nasty people in one way or the other. However many of them are very interesting! If I'm to pick one I think it'll have to be the most famous Swedish pirate, *Lasse i Gatan* or *Lars Gathenhielm*, as his name was changed to after being ennobled by the king. He worked as a privateer for many years attacking enemy ships around the Swedish west coast. I chose him as my favourite/most interesting pirate as I think the privateer business might have some parallels in our society today. How come a bad thing was seen as good by the state when it benefitted the state, and punishable by death when it did not? It shows that doing the right thing morally isn't always the successful thing. If being famous and rich is the same as successful that is. Which, I don't think it is really. Hmm. Sorry I'm rambling.

What was it that first got you interested in the Lolita scene?
It's such a long time ago now, I honestly don't remember exactly what it was. But sometime around 2004 I started to explore Japanese alternative music and started reading some anime. I must have come across Japanese alternative fashion through that, and in 2005 I ordered a copy of the *Gothic Lolita Bible* magazine. I remember spending hours and hours looking at the photos and trying to read the product information. Going online and checking out the brand websites. Dreaming of being able to buy my own dress. I was stuck!

You live in Sweden, could you tell us a little more about your local Lolita scene?
The Lolita scene here has changed a lot over the years. Years ago when I started wearing Lolita fashion and started going meet-ups the community was small but very close. As very few people knew about the fashion back then we really wanted to take the chance and meet. These days some people have "moved on" and a lot of new people have joined the community. Meet-ups are more local, often there are no more than five people attending each time, but people often meet their friends from other parts of the country at conventions and the like instead. Overall the scene here seems to be growing, and it makes me very happy to see!

Your brand is a combination of the old and the new, what is it that attracts you so much in history and times past?
One thing I love about historical fashion is the attention to detail and pride people put into their garments. As most had to make their clothes themselves they knew how much time and effort that was put into them, and thus took good care of their clothes. The same thing reflects quite a bit into Lolita fashion. Designers usually put a lot of effort into details and make sure to use good quality materials. As the dresses are so precious and expensive, people also take very good care of their clothes, and cherish them.

You sell Japanese brands and indi brands on your site as well as your own designs, how did you come to make the decision to do that? And how did the collaboration between those brands in particular and Ergi come to be?
As I started to attend more events selling Ergi items I started to realise I couldn't do this on my own if I were to have enough stock to really run a shop. Most Ergi items I make myself and as I had a regular day job at the time I didn't have time to sew as much as I wanted to. Also, I wanted to give people here the opportunity to discover more of the wonderful designs created by people around the world. One example of a brand introduction was when a friend and I organised a Lolita market event in *Gothenburg*. We contacted *Innocent World* and asked if they'd like to participate in the event in any way. As we asked on quite a short notice they couldn't attend personally, but we were allowed to purchase some stock to sell at the event. Innocent World's items were very well received at the event and I was so happy when they offered me the opportunity to continue to sell Innocent World goods.

You are currently doing a distribution collaboration with *Rouge Aerie Designs* for their *Nightmare Rising JSK*, how did you guys came to work together?
Both *Rouge Aerie Designs* and *Ergi by Piratessan* are currently designing items for *One Day in Paradise*'s new collection. My shop is acting as the "distributor hub" for the whole One Day in Paradise product range in Europe, so we will hopefully get the opportunity to show many more items from Rouge Aerie Designs in the future.

You also do commission work, which has been the most fun commission you've done so far?
A couple of years ago I was offered to do a set of pieces for a wedding. Jacket and waistcoat for the groom, waistcoat for the best man and a mini waistcoat for the ring bearer. Men's fashion is hard to make and it was a big challenge for me. The more satisfaction and relief when everything fitted on the wedding day and everyone was happy with the result!

In your personal opinion, what is the best and the worst about running a store and being an indi designer?
The best: the customers without a doubt. My business is blessed with such sweet and lovely customers. Countless times when I've felt down and worn out, a small thank you note from a customer or a cheerful facebook comment have lifted my spirit. I'm truly grateful for that!
The worst: bureaucracy! Customs problems, statistics and government reports that you have to fill in etc, etc. A lot of time is spent doing paperwork when you're running a small business. It's something that can't be ignored of course, but I sure wish it took less time.

You often participate in events, what do you like most about those and what was your most positive experience to date?
It's great to meet people that you've only been in contact with online. Also it's great to see that the same people come to see us at many different events and it's a great way to get feedback on the goods. Our most positive experience this far must have been the *NärCon* convention in Sweden this summer. For several hours after the event opened, our booth was so full of people that it was hard to get around in there. The positive response from visitors was overwhelming!

If the sky were literally the limit and money etc were of no issue, what would be the ultimate design you'd love to realise?
I'm dreaming of making a historical wedding dress, perhaps from the *Georgian* era. A rather toned down design made with exquisite materials. Gorgeous silks, hand made embroidery and hand stitched seams. It'd probably take a year to make *laughs*!

What can we expect from Ergi in 2014?
Our biggest thing in 2014 that I know of this far is the release of our *Sleipnir* dress. It's the Ergi by Piratessan design for One Day in Paradise's collection. Pre-orders are open right now, and release is due in spring. I'm very excited about it!

Front and back view of the Sleipnir JSK. You can see more views on Ergi's website.

As a closing note, do you have a message for our readers?
Be proud of yourself and dare to follow your own taste! Don't let people put you down and most of all, accept other people for who they are too. It's a cliche but none the less true *smiles*.

Official site: http://ergi.se
Official facebook: www.facebook.com/ErgiByPiratessan
Official twitter: twitter.com/Piratessan
Official tumblr: piratessan.tumblr.com

Interview by Hilde Heyvaert.
Photos of the Sleipnir JSK of Ergi by Piratesan for One Day in Paradise, provided by Eva.

IT'S ALL ABOUT LOVE...

This edition covers February also, and with the month that contains St-Valentine's we thought it would be a nice thought to make a J-fashion feature containing not only a diverse array of outfits, but also nothing but positivity as it's all about the things we love!

"I love the diversity and sense of adventure of STEAMPUNK!"

Goggles, customised safety goggles. **Specs**, Theo. **Aviator jacket**, H&M. **Scarf**, taobao. **Waistcoat**, House of Secrets Incorporated. **Shirt**, Takko. **Armor ring**, Poorman's Gold Label. **Chameleon skull ring**, Moonraven Designs. **Belt**, Veritas. **Gun holster**, DarkBlade. **Toy gun**, customised Nerf Maverick. **Hip bag**, Zara Girls. **Skirt**, House of Secrets Incorporated. **Petticoats**, Dear Celine and American Apparel. **Tights**, Teja Jamilla. **Spats**, House of Secrets Incorporated. **Boots**, Kickers.

"I love lolita because it makes me feel pretty and confident and because it motivates me to improve my sewing skills (the fact that the petticoat hides my scoliosis is a nice bonus)."

Jacket, Tai Yang Hua. **Dress**, Bodyline. **Blouse**, Bodyline. **Socks**, Secret Shop. **Shoes**, Brako Anatomics.
Accessories, Fly Away Fashion, Claire's, offbrand.

"I don't like modern clothes."

Outfit composed out of items that are vintage and thrifted.

"Handmade rocks!."

Hair accessories, handmade and offbrand. **Cardigan,** Primark. **Dress**, handmade. **Wristcuffs**, handmade. **Accessories**, various offbrand stores and handmade. **Flower shoe cuffs**, handmade. **Shoes**, local offbrand store.

"I can show the world who I am inside. (Also shenanigans and tomfoolery)."

Outfit composed out of items that are vintage, thrifted and customised.

"Frills are the best."

Faux fur collar, Camden Lock Market in Lonon, UK. **Dress**, Bodyline. **Tights**, **boots** and **accessories**, various offbrand stores.

"Absolutely fabulous."

Top hat, antique, family heirloom. **Goggles**, Large. **Military jacket**, Hearts & Roses. **Blouse**, Brave store. **Necklace**, offbrand. **Shorts**, thrifted. **Tights**, offbrand. **Boots**, Doc Martens.

"I love Mori Girl and Cult Party kei because they are whimsical, magical and unique."

Dress, Fan plus Friend. **Peignoir**, thrifted. **Shrug**, Baby Cupcake LLC. **Tights**, Teja Jamilla. **Shoes**, thrifted.

BCM SNAP

Want to be in the next edition's Snap page?
Send a photo of yourself wearing J-fashion, any kind will do, or steampunk (due to the current popularity of the style in Japan)
to hilde.heyvaert@gmail.com
and you may very well see yourself featured in the next edition!

JAPAN EXPO BELGIUM SNAP

Tour & Taxis, Brussels, Belgium, November 1 - 3

Photography by Hilde Heyvaert, Bert Van den Wyngaert, Margot Van Malderen and Annso Vermeyelen.

FLY AWAY FASHION WINTER 2013 TEA PARTY

THE MAD CARNIVAL

Houten, The Netherlands, November 24

Photography by and provided by Saltje Khenfi, Annso Vermeylen and Jeroen Willems.

the Grandioso
Gothic Happening
by Nocturno
and Discipulus
Brussels, Belgium
29 March 2014
COALESCAREMONIUM
RADIANT DARKNESS
With live concert by
LORD OF THE LOST
industrial party featuring
Lordbone
(Nocturna XXL)
Chavakiah
(Hell-ektroshock)
Alkemy
(BliZarK)
SiSeN
(Tokyo Decadance)
Second dancefloor playing alternating goth-genres
(80s Glam | Tradgoth | Gothic Metal | Minimal | Noise | Batcave)
Shopping market
Art exhibition
Photostudio
Dance, Light and Fashion performances
Master of Ceremony: Telombre
OPUS RELINQUE
LE BOUCHE A OREILLE

EVENT CALENDAR

All dates and information may be subject to change, none of this is within our control.

JANUARY 2014

I-ai European tour
16: Bar Live 301, Roubaix, France
17: 330 Live, The Hague, The Netherlands
18: MTC, Cologne, Germany
19: LR6, Brussels, Belgium
23: Rock Box, Luxembourg, Luxembourg
24: Abracadabar, Paris, France
www.ramen-events.com

FEBRUARY 2014

G.L.A.M.S., Paris 7 Days
Date: 14 – 20
14: Saint-Valentin
15: Awakening of the vampire
16: Eternal Loneliness
17: You're my Princess
18: Passionate kiss
19: Blood Party
20: soirée finale
Venue: Mister LO Gallery
City: Paris
Country: France
http://g-l-a-m-s.com

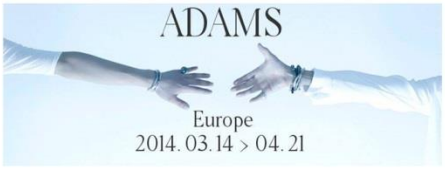
MARCH 2014

Japan Expo Sud
Date: 1 – 3
Venue: Parc Chanot exhibition center
City: Marseille
Country: France
www.japan-expo-sud.com

Gala Nocturna
La Belle et la Bête
Date: 8
Venue: Marble hall of the Antwerp Zoo
City: Antwerp
Country: Belgium
www.gala-nocturna.com

Made in Asia
Date: 14 - 16
Venue: Brussels Expo
City: Laeken
Country: Belgium
www.madeinasia.be

ADAMS European tour
20: P60, Amstelveen, The Netherlands
21: Bar Live 301, Roubaix, France
23: La Java, Paris, France
27: Garage Deluxe, Munich, Germany
28: venue TBA, Vienna, Austria
More dates and venues TBA!
www.ramen-events.com



COALESCAREMONIUM
Date: 29
Venue: the old monastery "Bouche à Oreille"
City: Brussels
Country: Belgium
www.coalescaremonium.info

APRIL 2014

Enchanted
Date: 5 & 6
5: Street Fashion Europe Event
Venue: Gibson Hall
6: Tea Party
Venue: Rubens Hotel
City: London
Country: UK
egl.livejournal.com/19427688.html

Elfia Haarzuilens
Previously known as Elf Fantasy Fair
Date: 19 – 21
Venue: Grounds of Castle De Haar
City: Haarzuilens
Country: The Netherlands
http://elfia.com

Antwerp Convention
Date: 27
Venue: Antwerp Expo
City: Antwerp
Country: Belgium
www.antwerpconvention.be

JULY 2014

Japan Expo
15th anniversary edition
Without Comic Con Paris this year!
Date: 2 – 6
Venue: Parc des Expositions Paris-Nord Villepinte
City: Villepinte
Country: France
www.japan-expo.com

D.E.S.C.
Dutch European Steampunk Convention
Date: 25 – 27
Venue: De Lindehorst
City: Meppel
Country: The Netherlands
www.dutcheuropeansteampunkconvention.nl

ANTWERP #4
CONVENTION
Sunday
27:04
2014
10h00
18h00
1 day of
SCI-FI
FANTASY
&
HORROR
6000 m² of
COMICS
BOOKS
GADGETS
GAMES
TOYS
MANGA
MOVIES
and much more
ALL NEW
GAMING ROOMS!
SPECIAL GUESTS!
COSPLAY!
DESIGN: WWW.KUSTOM.BE
ANTWERP EXPO
More info: ANTWERPCONVENTION.BE
JAN VAN RIJSWIJCKLAAN 191
2020 ANTWERPEN • BELGIUM
www.facebook.com/antwerp.convention

SUBMISSION RULES

1. Commitment.

When you agree to do something for the magazine, please commit and actually DO it. There's nothing as annoying as people that agree to do something and then don't. Especially right before deadline.
Yes people can become ill and life may get in the middle, but the deadline is announced well beforehand and there's really no need to wait 'till the very last moment to submit an article. Generally there is a lot of time for people to submit their pieces. I edit something as soon as I get a piece in, just to make sure that I can get everything done in time and health and life can only provide minimal disturbance. So you're actually doing me a favour by submitting as soon as possible/before deadline.

If someone doesn't submit to an edition without a valid reason or explanation, I reserve the right to set an earlier deadline for the person that hasn't submitted before whilst they committed, to make sure that we get the article in the next magazine they wish to cooperate on. I'm not doing this to hurt feelings or step on toes, but I don't want to give people the opportunity to hijack the magazine (with or without malicious intent). That sounds harsh, I agree, but in my personal experience some people systematically volunteer and never deliver, thus excluding others from the opportunity to submit and keeping the magazine from getting said piece in. It's exactly that I'm trying to avoid by putting rules like these in place.

Being chief editor isn't just all the fun and good times, it is a lot of hard work and sometimes I will have to make harsh decisions and this is one of them. I'm sorry if this upsets someone, that's not my intention, I'm trying to do right by the magazine and especially the people that genuinely want to contribute and our readers.

2. Deadline

Stick to the deadline. They are announced well in time. You can not only find it right here, but also on the very last page of the magazine. It's easy to find the deadline when you forget when it is.
The deadline for issue 16 is **February 20th** (seeing February is a shorter month I have to move it down a bit).
Submissions not in my inbox when I turn on my computer the morning of February 21st will not appear in the magazine. Plain and simple as that. Respect the deadline people!

The reason behind this is simple: not only does everyone have ample time to meet the deadline; from experience I know that extending it means that the magazine is likely never to happen.
Also: editing takes a lot of work, so if I want to release in a timely manner after the deadline I can't wait for articles 'till Hell freezes over.

3. Submitting

All entries for the magazine must be submitted by email on hilde.heyvaert@gmail.com
That is also the address where you can reach me with questions, remarks etc.
If you have an idea for the next edition, don't hesitate to let me know!

When you submit artwork or photos, they must be **at least** 2000 pixels and jpg files, the bigger the better! (e.g. a photo of 1333 x 2000 or 1500 x 2000 works fine, everything larger too, everything smaller may become problematic at final edit). Files that are too small are no use to me so please take that into account.
Also, be mindful of quality, I cannot stress this enough!
ONLY submit pieces you have the right to submit. If someone complains about copyright infringement over a piece you've submitted I will send these people to you. This is YOUR responsibility and you will be held accountable in an infringement case.

As far as the **spelling** is concerned, we do NOT allow text speech, texts written like you speak or things filled with purposefully bad spelling. Everyone makes mistakes and that's not an issue, hopefully those mistakes will be caught during the proofreading (not everything gets caught though; we're all only human after all).
That aside, everyone can operate a spell check I'm sure, please do that before submitting an article. It gets rid of the more obvious mistakes and makes life easier for proof readers and editor alike. It's just a matter of common courtesy.

About **photography and art**: I am aware that not everyone is equally talented. It is in no way so that one needs to have some kind of art degree to be allowed to submit to the magazine. We may not expect a degree, but we do, however, expect a certain quality. It doesn't matter that you don't have professional materials, just do your very best to submit things that are presentable.

NEXT EDITION

Our next edition will be BCM # 17,
spanning the months
March and April 2013.

Fashion

Style Spotlight: Sweet Lolita!

Sweet Lolita fashion feature
We are still looking for photo submission for this feature.
So if you have a good quality high resolution photo of yourself wearing Sweet Lolita (any kind of Sweet goes, be it casual, OTT, ...!), please don't hesitate to send it in!

And more!

J-Music Corner

CD reviews
Concert reviews
Interviews with
I-ai
Magistina Saga

Lifestyle

Event reviews
Belgian Cupcakes Lolita fashion meets
Artifakt steampunk meets
and several more!

Japan photo feature by Helcanen!
The talented Helcanen (www.helcanen.be) has once again visited the land of the rising sun and will share several pages of beautiful photography with us to share imagery from Japan.

And much, much more!

If you want to be featured in any of our outfit snaps,
send in a photo of yourself wearing J-fashion (any style allowed),
or come pose for us if you see a photographer of BCM at an event
and you may very well see yourself in the next Snap!

And more...

Exclusive art by Margot Van Malderen!

Hitt.
Live at Bar Live 301, Roubaix, France, November 30 2013.
Photo by Bert VAn den Wyngaert.